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**That Marvel—The Movie**



# That Marvel—The Movie

A Glance at Its Reckless Past, Its Promising  
Present, and Its Significant Future

By

Edward S. Van Zile, Litt.D.

With an Introduction by  
Will H. Hays

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Edward S. Van Zile



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## INTRODUCTION

To grasp the past progress, the present significance and the future possibilities of the motion picture; to express them with restraint and yet with clarity; and to impress the mind of any reader with the logic, as well as with the sincerity, of his viewpoint: these are a few of the qualities in this book which make it interesting and important. Mr. Van Zile visualizes the motion picture as more than an entertainment feature; and if his prophecies of its future seem over-optimistic to some, they need only to recall the flickering, crude apparitions of twenty years ago and the total cinematic blankness before that.

If, in twenty years, the motion picture has advanced from an awkward toy in a laboratory to the marvelous screen art and drama of today, who shall say what are the limits of its progress and its power?

The other arts are old. Music was born with speech and architecture came soon thereafter. Literature and sculpture were created when the first primitive man hacked an image on a bit of rock or bone. Misty ages have cradled their growth. The art of the

screen is new, and yet in its quarter of a century of life it has produced achievements as valuable in affecting human thought, as notable as those many great plays and operas and pictures have produced.

To the extent that it has grown so rapidly its importance is intensified. It is better that we should learn to crawl before we walk, and run before we fly.

As the representative of leading producers and distributors of American films, I can say that in no industry or art will be found men and women more earnest to progress in the right way. With a full sense of our responsibilities, and an ardor toward perfection, we are at work to do the best possible things for the motion picture and its worldwide audience. Mr. Van Zile not only gives us a word of cheer, but he puts into the public mind some thoughts about pictures which will pay for their lodging.

WILL H. HAYS.



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# That Marvel—The Movie

## CHAPTER I

### THE MOVIE'S NEW SIGNIFICANCE

*' Civilization in Peril—Leaders of Thought give Warning—Mankind Repeats Old Errors—Needs a Universal Language—The Motion Picture the Only Esperanto—Can the Screen Save the Race?—Why a History of the Movies is of Crucial Importance.*



## CHAPTER I

### THE MOVIE'S NEW SIGNIFICANCE

WITH striking unanimity contemporary writers dealing with the problems vexing humanity to-day express amazement at the fact that the race has learned so little from its variegated past, that age after age it commits, under new conditions and with changes in terminology, ancient blunders resulting, as they did aforetime, in the tragedies of war, revolution, famine, epidemics and poverty. As of old, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse periodically sally forth, to have their evil way with men; more potent, through long practice, in their iconoclasm, as they have proved in recent years, than they were in the days of our ancestors. The individual, unless he be a moron, learns lessons from experience, avoids committing errors that marred his past and may become, eventually, worthy the name of a civilized, even a highly civilized, being. But there are many experts in mob psychology who despondently assert that, while the individual may demonstrate his

well-nigh infinite superiority to his jungle progenitors, the seeming progress of the race as a whole has been merely illusory, that mankind is inherently as savage to-day as it was countless centuries ago.

But why should not the race at large follow the course pursued by the average individual and derive from its past errors a mandatory enlightenment enabling it to avoid those recurrent retrogressions that furnish the cynic with arguments against the proposition that mankind is gradually ascending to a higher plane of civilization? Various answers may be given to this query, but the one to which this chapter calls attention is to the effect that to the vast majority of the human race the story of mankind's struggles and failures, triumphs and defeats, attainment of high civilizations only to lose them again, is a sealed book. The individual man can recall every detail of his experience of life and can pursue a course of safety by aid of the lighthouse of his past. If this prerogative of the individual could be magnified to include all mankind might not the time come presently when no generation would repeat the costly errors of preceding generations? Would not the mass learn and profit by experience, as does the unit?

Now, is there any possible method whereby the

human race can be induced to go to school to its recorded past, to the end that our posterity may establish eventually a civilization permanently safe from the internal and external forces of disintegration that have destroyed so many mighty civilizations founded by our forefathers? Is there any way by which men in the mass may employ mass history in the same advantageous manner adopted by individuals who use their "dead selves as stepping-stones to higher things?" Lothrop Stoddard's recent book, in which he demonstrates most ably the disquieting fact that contemporary civilization is menaced by many and grave perils, presents to a public that habitually resents disturbance of its self-complacent optimism an array of startling data making the above queries, to put it mildly, extremely pertinent. "Of the countless tribes of men," says Stoddard, "many have perished utterly while others have stopped by the wayside, apparently incapable of going forward, and have either vegetated or sunk into decadence. Man's trail is littered with the wrecks of dead civilizations and dotted with the graves of promising peoples stricken by an untimely end."

But wrecks, whether they be of former civilizations or of vessels lost upon fatal rocks and reefs, have their value for succeeding nations and mariners.

They serve to point warning fingers away from the shoals of destruction toward the far-flung deeps where progress and safety are to be found. It was with this thought in mind, we have no doubt, that Wells and Van Loon gave to the reading public recently their absorbingly interesting volumes dealing with the rise of man from the amoeba to his present status as lord of the earth. Both these authors have been shocked and horrified by the race's manifestation in recent years of its tendency to revert at times to the murderous practices of its cave-man progenitors. That an antidote against periodical returns upon mankind's part to the evil practices of the past might be found in the popularization of histories telling a coherent story of our race's ups and downs was a thought that must have come to both Wells and Van Loon when they essayed the stupendous tasks that they have so worthily accomplished. But while the basic idea underlying their activities as historians is sound—for mankind must take cognizance of its past errors if it is to indulge in hope for the future—the depressing fact confronts us that the printed book, no matter how great may be its apparent vogue, reaches but a very small percentage of even the highly intelligent public. No. If the evils afflicting mankind were to have been cured through books the race would be free to-day from the major



disorders that threaten the health, if not the life, of existing civilization.

Upon this point, Frederick Palmer, in his interesting and inspiring book, "The Folly of Nations," says:

Our increasing library shelves are heavy with the records of all human activities, colossal accumulations of historical and scientific researches and the literature of imagination and philosophy—but one who seeks works on how to keep the peace finds that he has meagre references. . . . I have before me a list of the books and pamphlets the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace has published. If I have found little new in them, or in any books on the subject, it is *because it may be needless for me to search among their details for the great truths I have seen in the vividness of gun flashes on the field of battle.* . . .

The sentence in italics above, in which Palmer asserts that the great truths that have been revealed to him have come to him not from books but from the vividness of gun flashes on the field of battle, brings us to the crux of our argument, and will be used presently as a point of departure for what may prove to be a constructive suggestion of some value. If mankind is to be taught to follow the method employed by the individual in using the errors of the past to ensure a better future *the race must be enabled to visualize its past.* If it refuses to gain enlightenment through books some other medium for making

history the savior of posterity must be found. And it has been found. The great truths that were revealed by gun flashes to Frederick Palmer can find their way to the hearts and minds of the masses of men if we are wise and far-sighted enough to make full and intelligent use of a new medium through which Man may gaze upon the mistakes and shortcomings of his past, and, forewarned, avoid them in the future.

The race has found at last its universal language, its Esperanto not of the ear and tongue but of the eye. The evolution of the motion picture, developing in a few years from a toy kinetoscope to a Griffith wonder-worker, has made possible, for the first time in the history of humanity, an appeal to the heart and mind and soul of man that overcomes the ancient handicap of the confusion of tongues.] After many centuries the check to human progress given at the Tower of Babel has come to an end at the entrance to the motion-picture palace. It has been made possible at last for history to reveal its secrets, and vouchsafe its warnings, not to the comparatively few who read scholarly books but to the millions who, as democracy conquers the earth, have become masters of the destiny of nations.

In a brilliant and impressive address delivered last July by Will H. Hays at Boston, Mass., before the

National Education Association, the speaker presented facts and figures demonstrating the marvellous progress made of late by the motion-picture as a medium for instruction in both schools and colleges. He said:

To reflect on the possibilities of the motion-picture in education is to regret that one's school days were spent before this great invention came to us as a poultice to heal the blows of ignorance, but there is consolation in the fact that since the advent of pictures the whole world, regardless of age, can go to school.

"Regardless of age"—yes, and, also, regardless of race, language, inherited or acquired prejudices, and the hot passions that result in man's inhumanity to man. In other words, the human race may now sit before a screen and learn through the universal medium of the eye those great truths that have been revealed to Frederick Palmer by the vivid flashes of the battle-field.

Dreams, you say? Generalities? A vision that begets nothing but vain hopes? Suppose, then, that we make a concrete suggestion that, should it arouse interest and create discussion, might result eventually in giving to what you call "airy nothings", a "local habitation and a name." The insuperable obstacle that has prevented heretofore the establishment somewhere upon earth of a university designed

for the educational needs of the race at large has been linguistic. In a polyglot world a great central station for the dissemination of knowledge was impossible so long as that knowledge could be inculcated only by means of the written or spoken word. But to-day, as Mr. Hays points out in the address quoted above, instruction is given, from our primary schools up to our universities, through the method of visualization; and, furthermore, repeated tests have shown that students prepared for examinations by aid of pictures obtain higher marks than examinees whose coaching was confined to the media of books and lectures. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the significance of the above in connection with the dream we have taken the liberty to dream. A world university, a fountain of all acquired knowledge for the race at large, became practicable the moment the linguistic problem was solved by the Esperanto of the Eye. No longer was the vision of a race finding, as do individuals, strength and wisdom for meeting the perils of the future by contemplating the mistakes of the past a vague, shadowy mockery, destined to vanish with a return to common-sense. On the contrary, common-sense had become suddenly associated with a project that had left the realm of the abstract to enter the domain of the concrete. For what, in the name of common-sense, could make

so impressive an appeal to the practical man of affairs as the perfecting of a method whereby the recurrent set-backs to progress that peoples, and mankind at large, inflict upon themselves can be reduced to a minimum or, perhaps, rendered permanently obsolete?

Let us suppose that what we will call, tentatively, our Lighthouse of the Past had found its Rockefeller or Carnegie, that several hundred million dollars were available for the establishment of a world-centre of enlightenment wherein all the peoples of the earth could study what man has done in his dual character of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, is it not certain that the evil influence of the latter would lose its grip eventually upon a race that is so strangely compounded of the god-like and the diabolical? Seeing is believing. Show mankind both the glories and the horrors of the past, let each tribe, nation, race ponder its own achievements and its own failures, reveal to the pilgrim students flocking to our lighthouse from every corner of the earth both the microscopic and the telescopic aspects of history, to the end that they may return to their respective native lands inspired and eloquent advocates of a better world, and, lo, the problems seemingly insoluble to us to-day will be solved through a mass enlightenment that, before the advent of the screen,

was beyond the wildest dreams of the most optimistic visionaries.

And where, you ask, shall our Mecca for the pilgrims of progress be located? For many reasons, there is but one country to-day available for the project briefly outlined above, and that is the United States. Geographical, historical, diplomatic, financial, educational and racial factors interwoven in the enterprise combine to make ours the only land in which this Lighthouse of the Past, this university of universities, could stand a fair chance of functioning successfully. Somewhere in our country there is an ideal location contiguous to one of our great cities adapted by man and nature to the needs of our experiment in racial regeneration. Where this location may be is a question to be answered in the future. Upon this site, however, when it has been chosen, can not you who have read the foregoing, and have begun, perhaps, to dream my dream, picture a vast group of buildings, both beautiful and utilitarian, within which all that mankind has done of good or evil shall be revealed, year after year, generation after generation, to the critical but hopeful eyes of the race at large? Give full rein to your imagination in this connection! Here shall be shown to our Mecca's pilgrims all of Man's achievements in the realms of science, art, government,

industry, commerce, social betterment. Here shall be revealed, also, the blunders, the failures, the tragedies that were the price paid for these achievements.

Here may you visualize the epic tale of Man's rise from protoplasm to power, from an amoeba to ruler of the earth. Here may a Chinaman study the past of his people through forty centuries of weal and woe; the modern Greek glory in the splendors of ancient Athens or appraise his compatriots' achievements of yesterday; the Norseman, the Slav, the Teuton, the Celt, the Anglo-Saxon, the Latin, the Jap, the Arab, the East Indian learn from the screen what his race, or nation, or tribe has done for or against—and they have all done both—the cause of advancing civilization. There shall radiate, if our dream comes true, from this great centre where all knowledge is visualized a light that shall grow ever brighter, as the generations come and go, routing the errors of ignorance and racial prejudice and making possible that for which the great hearted of the race have so long striven in vain, namely, the brotherhood of man.

Let me transpose two sentences from a timely book from which I have already quoted. Says Frederick Palmer on the last page of his enlightening volume "The Folly of Nations": "The world of to-day thinks through its eyes looking at the screen. Where

are our millionaires who seek worthy objects for their benefactions?" And, from another recently published book, "The Salvaging of Civilization," by H. G. Wells, can be most aptly quoted the following pertinent excerpt:

It has become clear that the task of bringing about that consolidated world state which is necessary to prevent the decline and decay of mankind is not primarily one for the diplomatists and lawyers and politicians at all. It is an educational one. It is a moral based on an intellectual reconstruction. The task immediately before mankind is to find release from the contentions, loyalties and hostilities of the past, which make collective world-wide action impossible at the present time, in a world-wide common vision of the histories and destinies of the race. On that basis, and on that alone, can a world control be organized and maintained. The effort demanded from mankind, therefore, is primarily and essentially a bold reconstruction of the outlook upon life of hundreds of millions of minds.

During the past eight years the human race has undergone the bloodiest ordeal of the ages and, succeeding it, the bitterest disappointment that mankind has yet been forced to endure. A confusion of tongues that made European diplomacy helpless at a great crisis rendered a world war inevitable and the lack of a common medium of enlightenment at Versailles postponed indefinitely the establishment



of permanent peace upon earth. Had Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando been obliged every morning at the Peace Conference to spend several hours, before tackling the affairs of a disordered world, in front of a screen upon which was depicted before their keen eyes the immediate tragic past and the deplorable present of the nations of the earth the final outcome of their deliberations might have been of greater value to the cause of civilization than it has proved to be. Had the Esperanto of the Eye been adopted as the official language at Versailles could not the Conference have avoided a repetition of the fatal errors that crept into its verdicts as an evil heritage from its century-old predecessor, the Conference of Vienna? Did not Wilson and Lloyd George fail to take advantage of a new medium of enlightenment that was denied a hundred years ago to Metternich and Talleyrand? Is it not even possible that had the cinema played an enlightening part at Versailles that which is of real value in the basic idea underlying the League of Nations might be exercising greater potency in a quarrelsome world to-day than it appears to be?

These queries and conjectures are put forward not for the purpose of stimulating further controversy regarding the details of what I have called above "the bitterest disappointment that mankind has yet

been forced to endure," namely, the Versailles Peace Conference. They are thrown out merely to emphasize the comprehensive fact, recognized by Palmer, Stoddard, Wells, and many other able contemporary writers, that mankind, if it is to make use of the errors of the past to avoid the pitfalls of the future, must find a way to get great truths into the mind of the race at large not through the lurid flashes of the battlefield but by means of a universal language. There is, and for an indefinite future there can be, but one such medium of expression, namely, the Esperanto of the Eye. Through it, and through it alone, can Wells, and those who believe with him that civilization may yet be salvaged, further that "world-wide common vision of the histories and destinies of the race" that has become of late the one great hope mankind can to-day reasonably cherish.

A Lighthouse of the Past, a university of universities, a fountain of all revealed knowledge inculcated through a medium understood of all men, a Mecca for the pilgrims of peace and progress from all corners of the earth, forever adapting itself to the growing needs of mankind for enlightenment, sending forth, year after year, its polyglot graduates to carry its teachings, warnings, promises to every tribe and nation on the planet—is it not a consummation to be devoutly wished, a dream worth every sacrifice to bring within

the purview of reality? If your answer to this query, dear reader, is in the affirmative, the chances seem to be that you will find the following chapters of this book worthy of your earnest consideration.



## CHAPTER II

### THE MOVIE AT ITS BIRTH

*Muybridge's Trotting Horses—Edison's Kinetoscope—  
The Problem Eastman Solved—The Movie as a Universal  
Language—A Toy for Children that Became a World  
Power—The Men Who Rocked the Cradle of a New Hope  
for the Race.*



## CHAPTER II

### THE MOVIE AT ITS BIRTH

FOR countless ages Man watched the birds in flight, realized his own motor handicaps, and relegated his hope of flying to a life which he might eventually lead in the world of spirits. An insect or an angel might have wings but the lord of the earth was by nature debarred from the air. Then somebody somewhere invented a kite, and for another series of centuries Man played with a toy whose ultimate significance he failed to grasp. He had not as yet sensed the picturesque truth that the world's most potential inventions have come to us, by a process of evolution, from children's playthings. The laboratory had its beginnings in the nursery. The cave-man's children taught him progress.

/ Through suggestions from the kite, the Wright brothers made air navigation possible. From another toy, Edison's kinetoscope, has come the cinematograph. And even its inventor, possessing,

though he does, the creative imagination, failed to realize until recent years the startling possibilities imbedded in the plaything with which he entertained the cosmopolitan throngs that flocked to the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893.

When Edison recently made a visit to the General Electric Company's plant at Schenectady, N. Y., to recall old memories and to forecast the future possibilities of electrical devices, he found there still standing two insignificant old sheds by the river bank, the modest plant of the original Edison Machine Works of 1886. In amazing contrast to this relic of the past there stretched away in every direction factory after factory, covering an area of 523 acres, and vouchsafing to the Wizard of Menlo Park a concrete manifestation of the fact that in this age of progress even the wildest dream may eventually come true. But the contrast between Edison's work-shop of 1886 and the General Electric plant of to-day, astounding as it is, is, in its outward aspects, a local phenomenon. To visualize it, you must go to Schenectady, N. Y. The difference between Edison's kinetoscope of thirty years ago and the moving picture of the moment can be appreciated, on the other hand, by a mere effort of the memory and the imagination combined. The kinetoscope has been relegated to the attic but the moving



picture has acquired as its domain not merely the earth but the starry heavens and the realms of space. Eventually the very outer edge of the physical universe is destined to be screened.

Before recounting presently the amazing and romantic story of the evolution of the motion picture from a plaything to a medium unrivalled for the promulgation of both good and evil, a Frankenstein created by Man's ingenuity that must be given a soul to make it safe for the world, it may be well to pause at the outset to answer the query, frequently put to the writer, as to why what seems to be merely a popular form of amusement should be taken seriously as a factor in the struggle modern civilization is undergoing to save itself from destruction. Perhaps no better answer to this question can be given than is furnished by certain facts and figures presented by Will H. Hays to the National Education Association in session at Boston, Mass., in July, 1922, in the following illuminating words:

In a little over fifteen years the motion picture has grown from a naked idea until to-day it is the principal amusement of millions. It has become one of the greatest industries in America, having an investment of \$1,250,000,000, with \$75,000,000 paid annually in salaries and wages, and \$520,000,000 taken in annually for admissions. In the United States, in the big cities and in those ample-shaded towns and villages which comprise

America, there are perhaps fifteen thousand motion picture theatres and in those theatres more than seven million seats. Taking into account at least two performances a day, and applying the collected statistics, we estimate that every seven days between Maine and California, fifty million men, women and children look for an hour or two at the motion picture screen. Y

Nothing further need be said in regard to the importance of the general subject we have under consideration. A medium for expression which makes its imprint weekly upon the minds of approximately one half of our population is worthy of the closest study by the people of this country. Its origin, its early growth, its present status and its future as a universal language, destined, perhaps, to be the greatest civilizing medium the race has known, are topics the timely importance of which can hardly be over-rated. To paraphrase an old political truism, as goes the screen so goes the country—and, possibly, the race at large.

Briefly the early history of the cinematograph is in substance as follows: By the revolutionary achievement of the Frenchman Daguerre, who discovered a method whereby sunlight could be made to fix a permanent image of an object upon a sensitized surface, a door was opened showing the way to the marvellous triumphs that the last century has vouchsafed to the camera. But impasse after

impasse checked the progress of the pioneers of photography. When Daguerre began his historic career as the first photographer, an exposure of six hours—more than twenty thousand seconds—was required to obtain a permanent impression of the object photographed. Instantaneous photography seemed at that time as remote a possibility as photography in colors appeared to be but a short time ago. But the time came when Chemistry, the mother of modern marvels, solved the problem confronting the early photographers. The laboratory found a surface so sensitive to light that it could take and retain a picture perfect in detail in less than one thousandth part of a second—a feat which in Daguerre's time would have required an exposure twenty million times as long. How important in connection with the eventual advent of the motion picture was Man's mastery of the time-element in photography is tersely explained by Frederick A. Talbot, an authority on the early history of the cinematograph, as follows:

The wonderful achievement of instantaneous photography assumed at first a scientific rather than a commercial value. Many a "snap-shot" is taken which does not betray whether the plate has been exposed for six hours or only one-thousandth of a second; but, on the other hand, a "snap-shot" of a quickly moving object may seize upon and fix an interesting characteristic motion. It was this fact which led certain ingenious

minds to perceive in instantaneous photography a valuable means of analyzing motion. If a single photograph reproduced the exact posture of a moving object at any given instant of time, they argued that a series of such photographs, if taken in sufficiently rapid succession, would form a complete record of the whole cycle of movements involved, for instance in the jump of a horse or the flap of a bird's wing.

Thomas A. Edison, in an interview given to Mr. Hugh Weir and recently published in *McClure's Magazine*, enlightens us regarding Mr. Talbot's proposition. Asked what first suggested to him the idea of the motion-picture camera, Mr. Edison said:

The phonograph. I had been working for several years on experiments for recording and reproducing sound, and the thought occurred to me that it should be possible to devise an apparatus to do for the eye what the phonograph was designed to do for the ear. It was in 1887 that I began my investigations, and photography, compared with what it is to-day, was in a decidedly crude state of development. Pictures were made by "wet" plates, operated by involved mechanism. The modern dry films were unheard of. I had only one fact to guide me at all. This was the principle of optics, technically called "the persistence of vision," which proves that the sensation of light lingers in the brain for anywhere from one-tenth to one-twentieth part of a second after the light has disappeared from the sight of the eye.

In other words, the fact that the human eye is a photographic camera possessing memory may

eventually save civilization from the cataclysm of which contemporary prophets warn us, *in that it has made possible a medium of communication for the race at large denied to us by the tongue.*

Posterity will owe a great debt of gratitude to Thomas A. Edison for various revolutionary inventions but it begins to be apparent to optimistic observers that perhaps his chief claim to the thanks of mankind will be due to the initial impetus he gave to the motion picture, vouchsafing to a bewildered race the universal language of the eye, by which, possibly, the brotherhood of man may eventually function to overcome the evils that have darkened our past. Says Edison: "I do not believe that any other single agency of progress has the possibilities for a great and permanent good to humanity that I can see in the motion picture. And these possibilities are only beginning to be touched."

Will it not repay us, then, to examine the "possibilities" to which Mr. Edison refers, to the end that we may take the screen more seriously than heretofore, may regard motion picture theatres more attentively and hopefully as being, perhaps, civilization's one best bet? Unless, however, we get a somewhat comprehensive view of the variegated past of the movies "the permanent good to humanity" that they can accomplish will not be

apparent to us. Let us, therefore, get on with our story.

The early history of the cinematograph presents a study in international rivalry. The United States, England and France wrote names on the scroll of fame upon which the scientists and promoters who rendered motion pictures possible make their bid for immortality. Edison and Eastman, Americans, Daguerre and the Messrs. Lumière and Sons, Frenchmen, and Muybridge and Robert Paul, Englishmen, are the leading names among the *dramatis personæ* who took part in the first act of a drama that began as an amusement for children but which now promises to develop into a miracle-play regenerating the human race.

Scientific technicalities have no place in a book designed to tell the story of the movies from what is called in newspaper circles "the human interest standpoint," but it is necessary to apportion credit here for what the three nations above mentioned did respectively toward solving the initial problems confronting the pioneers who raised photography from a tortoise to a bird, giving it pinions that defy time and space. To change the metaphor, Daguerre, a Frenchman, rocked the cradle of photography, Muybridge, an Englishman, taught it to run, and Edison, an American, gave it wings.

Behold here, at last, a triple alliance that is changing the face not merely of a continent but of a planet. The mountains were in labor and brought forth not a little mouse but a marvellous creature whose dynamics for both good and evil can not be over-estimated.

The claim that England can put forward for furnishing first aid to the movies bears the date 1872 and is summarized as follows by Mr. Edison:

An Englishman of the name of Muybridge, who was an enthusiast on two subjects—cameras and race horses—was visiting, at his California farm, Senator Leland Stanford, who was also something of a “crank” on the subject of blooded trotters. During the visit the merits of a certain horse, owned by the Senator, came under discussion, Stanford contending for one fact, and his guest arguing for another. To settle the dispute Muybridge conceived an ingenious plan.

Along one side of the private race-course on the farm he placed a row of twenty-four cameras. Attached to the shutter of each, he fastened a long thread, which in turn was carried across the track, and then, to make sure of obtaining sharp exposures, he erected a white screen opposite to serve as a reflector. When all was in readiness the race horse was turned loose down the track.

As it dashed past the rows of cameras the various threads were snapped, and a series of photographs, establishing each successive point in the “action” of the horse, were automatically registered. When they were developed they revealed for the first time a complete photographic record of the minutest details of a horse in

actual motion, and Muybridge had the satisfaction of using them to win his argument.

He would have laid the pictures away in his private collection, but someone suggested trying the effect on a Zoetrope (akin to the Kinetoscope) apparatus. The result was so startling that it created something of a public sensation. But, except as a novelty, there was little practical benefit gained. To have made an actual motion picture, lasting even for the space of a single minute, at the rate of twelve exposures per second, the minimum for steady illusion, would have required, under the plan of Muybridge, seven hundred and twenty different cameras.

Half a century has passed since that historic day when Muybridge demonstrated that he had a better eye for trotting horses than Senator Stanford and put California on the map as a prominent centre of motion picture progress, a position which that State has most brilliantly maintained. During the fifty years from 1872 to 1922, the period from Muybridge to Griffith, the scientific problems confronting the pioneer inventors of the cinematograph, and they were many and difficult, were solved; and from the crude pictures of a trotting horse in motion were evolved the screen marvels of to-day. The high lights of that crucial half century in the development of the movies, a development that is not only interesting in itself but full of encouragement to the optimist who believes that the new and universal



language of the eye may be employed to warn the race against repeating the errors of the past, will be considered in the following chapters of this book.



## CHAPTER III

### THE MOVIE'S FIRST STEPS

*The Movie Learns to Walk—George Eastman's Great Achievement—The Kinetoscope Goes to England—John W. Paul Throws Motion Pictures on a Screen—London "Bobbies" See the First Movie Ever Shown—America, England and France the Triple Alliance of the Screen.*



## CHAPTER III

### THE MOVIE'S FIRST STEPS

No story of the evolution of the motion picture from an experiment in photography to a factor in the daily lives of millions of people would be complete without a passing reference to the impetus given by George Eastman, of Rochester, N. Y., to what was at the outset a toy for children—destined eventually to challenge the untried resources of the laboratory. Thomas A. Edison says: "Without George Eastman I don't know what the result would have been in the history of the motion picture." For a long time after Muybridge had demonstrated the possibility of photographing objects in motion any real advance in what was practically a new art was impeded by the weight, fragility and general inadequacy of the glass plates employed in camera work. Gelatine, transparent paper, and other substitutes for glass, were tried in vain. How Eastman finally solved the problem by the use of

celluloid is explained tersely and clearly by F. A. Talbot as follows:

In the early part of 1889 experiments were being made to discover a varnish to take the place of gelatine sheets. One of his chemists drew Mr. Eastman's attention to a thick solution of gun-cotton in wood alcohol. It was tested to prove its suitability to take the place of the gelatine, but was found wanting in practical efficiency. However, Mr. Eastman recognized the solution as one which might prove to be the film base for which he had been searching. He had had such a medium in mind when engaged in his first experiments in 1884, which resulted in the production of the stripping film. He decided to utilize this solution of gun-cotton in wood alcohol and fashion it into the foundation for the sensitized emulsion, so that stripping and other troublesome operations of a like nature might be avoided. He was moved to this experiment because this solution could be made almost as transparent practically as glass. Accordingly he set to work to devise a machine to prepare thin sheets such as he required from this mixture. *Success crowned his efforts, and in 1889 the first long strip of celluloid film suited to cinematograph work appeared in the United States.*

Thus had George Eastman removed for Thomas A. Edison the one obstacle that had hitherto made the latter's projected kinetoscope impracticable, and celluloid had become the "Open Sesame" to that wonderland in which the movie fans of to-day delight to wander.

Like the telephone which was, in its early days, looked upon as an interesting scientific toy not destined to play an important part in the daily lives of the people at large, Edison's kinetoscope was not taken seriously by the crowds who found it but one of many novel features combining to make the Chicago World Fair of 1893 a success. They flocked to see it, marvelled at its ingenuity, but failed, as did Edison himself, to realize that the world had been enriched by not merely a new plaything but by a novel medium for influencing the destinies of the race, the ultimate stupendous significance of which we, even thirty years later, can only vaguely estimate. It is amazing but true that, so little did Edison appreciate the fact that he had invented not an ephemeral toy but the only universal language yet vouchsafed to the race, he neglected to obtain patents for his kinetoscope outside of the United States. His oversight in this connection had far-reaching results, the most important of which historically gave to England instead of the United States the honor of throwing upon a screen the first "movie," as that word is understood to-day.

That a Yankee notion should fail to realize its own possibilities and be forced eventually to thank an Englishman for placing it upon the heights from which it was to win world-dominion is not an agree-

able reflection to the ultra-patriotic American, but our story of the evolution of the movie must now take us across the Atlantic and introduce to us Mr. Robert W. Paul, electrical engineer and manufacturer of scientific apparatus, whose workshops were located in Hatton Garden, London. Reversing the process of the "star of empire" it was Eastward that the movie, in its search for development, had taken its way. Cradled in California, it had learned to walk in Menlo Park, New Jersey, and Rochester, New York, and was now to realize its youthful possibilities in the British metropolis.

Two peripatetic Athenians, one of them a toy-maker, had seen, admired and coveted the Edison kinetoscope at the Chicago World's Fair. They had the European market in mind for the new plaything and acted at once without looking into the question of patents. To Paul, at Hatton Garden, London, came the Athenians with a kinetoscope they had obtained in the United States, urging him to manufacture duplicates with which they might supply the English, and possibly the Continental, market. Paul, however, had read his Virgil and heeded the old poet's warning against Greeks bearing gifts. Supposing, of course, that Edison had protected his invention by English patents, Paul rejected the proposition of the Greeks. Later, however, he



discovered that, so far as the English Patent Office was concerned, he was free to manufacture kinetoscopes for the European market and presently went at it with a will and with considerable success.

But Paul was a live wire with a vision, as, years ago, I clairvoyantly called Will H. Hays. He realized that the kinetoscope was, like our dead selves, but a stepping-stone to higher things. It furnished a motion picture to only one observer at a time. What Paul wanted, and what the world has proved that it craved, was a device whereby thousands of spectators could gaze at a movie at one and the same moment. Muybridge had solved the first problem in motion photography, Edison the second, Eastman the third, and Paul was confronted by the fourth, perhaps the most difficult of the quartet.

How this resourceful Englishman managed to render the peep-hole of a kinetoscope obsolete and replace it by a screen upon which countless eyes might gaze is a matter of technical and scientific interest, out of place in the story we are telling. Suffice it to say that what he achieved in overcoming the obstacles confronting him has given him a high place on the list of inventors who, one by one, and in widely separated corners of the planet, made possible, during a half century of effort, the motion picture of to-day.

We get from Frederick A. Talbot a side-light on an historic episode in London that was the turning-point in the career of Robert W. Paul, and of even greater importance to the human race than any but a few far-seeing movie enthusiasts have yet realized. Says Talbot:

About three o'clock one morning, in the early months of 1895, the quietness of Hatton Garden was disturbed by loud and prolonged shouts. The police rushed hurriedly to the building whence the cries proceeded, and found Paul and his colleagues in their workshop, giving vent to whole-hearted exuberance of triumph. They had just succeeded in throwing the first perfect animated pictures upon a screen. To compensate the police for their fruitless investigation, the film, which was forty feet in length, and produced a picture seven feet square, was run through the special lantern for their edification. They regarded the strange spectacle as ample compensation, and had the satisfaction of being the first members of the public to see moving pictures thrown upon the screen.

Unfortunately the law-abiding fervor that animates the soul of the London "Bobby" did not get into the camera on that epoch-making night. Had it done so, the early career of the motion picture might have been less objectionable to the guardians of morals on both sides of the Atlantic. But that's another story—to be told in a later chapter. It is only just to say here, however, that it was not the

fault of Robert W. Paul that in their early years the movies went, more or less, to the bow-wows.

Of Paul and his sensational achievement as the father, or, rather, the step-father, of the movie there is much interesting data extant, the leading features of which are destined to hold a permanent place in the history of the newest of the arts developed by Man's genius. How, in partnership with Sir Augustus and Lady Harris, he made of the Olympia Theatre in London the first picture palace in the world, catching the popular fancy with what he called his "theatograph"; how he was eventually in control of eight London theatres showing motion pictures; how his contract with the Alhambra Theatre for two weeks of pictures in March, 1896, was stretched eventually to cover four years are part of the early records of the screen and account for the name "Daddy Paul" by which this ingenious and daring Englishman is known in movie circles across the water.

But even Paul's early successes with motion pictures in the London music halls did not open his eyes, or the eyes of his colleagues, to the possibilities and permanency of the new form of entertainment they had given to the world. Both Paul and Sir Augustus Harris believed that the fickle public would soon tire of what seemed to be to them merely an ephemeral

novelty, to be soon relegated, as had been countless vaudeville innovations, to the over-flowing theatrical lumber-room. One of the strangest features of the history of the motion pictures during the period of their early youth is that hardly one of their scientific or commercial exploiters, from Edison down, had anything like a full appreciation of the future that awaited the screen, of the marvellous power for growth that lay in the germ from which the toy kinetoscope had sprung.

There are those who assert that the ultimate salvation of modern civilization will be accomplished by a triple alliance established by the United States, England and France. Those who make this prediction have in mind, of course, a trio of fighting nations who, by force of arms, will eventually compel an unruly world to come to order and accept the point of view cherished by the conquerors. But is it not possible that America, England and France, having worked together as a triple alliance to perfect the motion picture, have given to the race a medium for enlightenment that may make another world war in defence of civilization unnecessary? Is it not, at least, conceivable that these three nations, whose inventive and progressive genius made, through Daguerre, Edison and Paul, the motion picture possible may find, in time to save humanity from a

hideous cataclysm, that the screen, in a democratic world, may so strengthen the influence of peace-making diplomacy as to render eventually armies and navies practically obsolete?

And in this connection it is interesting to note that the claim of France to a high place in that triple alliance which made the movies a tremendous power for both good and evil in a perturbed world does not rest wholly upon Daguerre and his invention of the daguerreotype. No account of the evolution of the motion picture would be complete without reference to the impetus given to the new industry in "Daddy" Paul's halcyon days by the Messrs. Lumière and Sons, of Paris, France, manufacturers of photographic apparatus, dry plates, etc. The Edison kinetoscope had come within their purview in 1893 and they had realized at once, as had Paul, that a motion picture that could have but one observer at a time was merely a butterfly in the chrysalis. The Messrs. Lumière solved ingeniously, and in their own way, the problem that had confronted Paul and are entitled to a part of the glory that goes to those who changed the kinetoscope from a peep-show for one to a screen display for hundreds.

It was the French machine that brought Edison's one-eyed toy back to the country of its birth raised to the dignity of an amusement for adults. Through

the energy and far-sightedness of Richard G. Hollaman, head of the Eden Musèe, of New York, the Lumière apparatus, in the Fall of 1896, created something of a sensation in the American metropolis. To the Eden Musèe, known to fame for its presentation of historic personages of the past, belongs the honor of making the path to glory easy to the celebrities of to-day. Fame was now to discard stuffed effigies as a reward for greatness to use the screen to bring the exalted of the earth down to the masses. The movie had been finally launched upon a career that was to lead it toward heights from which to-day it can see a future that, unless the human race wantonly commits hari-kari, will be unimaginably glorious.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MOVIE GOES TO THE BAD

*The Era of Fly-by-Night Speculation—The Mushroom Movie Craze—The Screen's Youthful Indiscretions—Stupidity and Cupidity as Partners—The Degradation of a New Art Form—Boy-Made Scenarios—The Stage Versus the Screen—A Future for Both.*





## CHAPTER IV

### THE MOVIE GOES TO THE BAD

WHOEVER asserted that "you can't indict a whole nation" made a sweeping generalization that was both historically and psychologically accurate. In what I have said, and am about to say, regarding the evil influences affecting the early years of the movie I do not wish to do an injustice to those early promoters in the new industry who refused to degrade the screen, or to treat it as an ephemeral, wild-cat speculation. There were producers, at the very outset of the industry, who builded perhaps better than they knew, and who, because of their refusal to take the path of least resistance, are now, after a quarter of a century of film exploiting, the most successful and influential factors in the industry. They prevailed where those whose pernicious activities threatened the rise, perhaps the permanency of the movie, fell by the wayside.

It is regrettable, nevertheless, that the childhood of the movie was so deeply influenced by various

pioneers who could not realize its power for good nor foresee its future greatness both as an art and as a moulder of public opinion, morals and enlightenment. But the screen in its early years was dominated largely by get-rich-quick exploiters, adventurers out for the easy money flowing into the coffers of the movie "palaces," less admirable in most ways than the hard-boiled treasure-seekers who flock to newly-discovered gold-fields. There is something of the romantic and heroic in the Argonauts who developed California, the South African diamond mines and the Klondike. They risked their lives in a great game of chance and won or lost in a dramatic struggle in which the winners had displayed necessarily certain sturdy, sterling qualities.

The gold-bearing realm of the movies, on the other hand, was invaded at the outset by a good many speculative fortune-seekers who staked upon their ventures nothing but their craftiness and their audacity. They were about as admirable as a bucket-shop gambler who, by expending a minimum of money and energy, hopes for a movement of the market that shall make him rich over night. The movie, as an anonymous writer in *Collier's Weekly* says, was, in its early days,

nothing that could justifiably attract a big investor, or a real novelist, or a good actor. The first movie-actors

were for the most part of the old-time chorus-girl and spear-carrier type; the great scenario-writers were the shop-girls or office boys who were told of the sudden need for stories, with no real training or knowledge of writing—with here and there a newspaper cub or magazine embryo who stumbled into a new gold vein where stories written in an hour could be sold for fifteen dollars; the first investors were the clerks or advertising men or born gamblers, usually in touch with the cheap end of the theatrical world, who had a little money to invest in a new scheme, provided it “looked good” and “wasn’t too big.”

It is a safe bet that the majority of my readers can remember the time when they looked upon motion pictures with a mingling of contempt and impatience, realizing vaguely, perhaps, the promise the screen suggested of better things but disgusted with its seemingly stubborn adherence to cheap claptrap, crude melodrama, and unspeakably vulgar farce. My personal experience in connection with the movies is, I imagine, typical of that which has come to thousands of Americans during the past quarter of a century. I can still remember the thrill I experienced when I first gazed upon human beings in motion screened by a camera. What the photographed puppets did was not, at the moment, of great consequence. The mere fact that they came and went, walked, ran, danced before my eyes was startling enough. I was fascinated by a scientific

achievement that was of itself sufficiently interesting to warrant my presence in that audience of long ago.

But my subsequent activities as a movie fan in embryo were of short duration. Like thousands of my fellow Americans I came, I saw, but I did not conquer—in fact, I was repelled. For years thereafter I avoided the movie palaces, realizing that I was temperamentally unfitted to enjoy optical contacts with adultery, murder, theft and sudden death. Nor was my sense of humor of a kind that found anything to laugh at in squash-pie farce.

But even the cupidity and stupidity that had their effect upon the screen in its earlier years could not kill the goose that was destined eventually to lay something better than golden eggs. Though ignorance, avarice and vulgarity for many years influenced, to too great an extent, the movies, they could not destroy its inherent power of regeneration, nor the cumulative force exercised by the higher type of producers which eventually made that regeneration possible. How the screen was saved from becoming the exclusive property of the underworld by the survival of the fittest, or the most enlightened, of the early promoters, will be told presently, but it is interesting, at this juncture, to discuss for a moment the question as to why its earlier career was so deplorably reprehensible.

Reference has been made to the fact that in the United States, England and France the first exploiters of motion pictures were under the delusion that this new form of entertainment was of merely ephemeral value, that its drawing-power as a theatrical novelty would soon pass away. Thus it was that in this country small men, of small means, hastened to "take flyers" in the latest get-rich-quick device, and throughout the United States was observed a mushroom growth of "picture palaces," financed on a shoe-string and designed to collect "easy money" before it became uneasy. There were those among the pioneer promoters of motion pictures who had read of the tulip craze in Holland, or of the Mississippi bubble in France, and imagined that the bottom would some day suddenly fall out of the "movie boom," ruining those who had not "cashed in" in time. They failed to realize that humanity could not afford to lose an inestimable boon that had come to it, namely, a new method for the telling of stories.

There had existed, before the movie's birth, but four media for the dissemination of narratives—the tongue, the play, the printed story, and the printed poem. In the childhood of the race, tale-telling was confined to word of mouth. Later on, the stage came into existence, and mankind's craving for stories was

partially satisfied by the drama. The invention of the printing-press gave to a soul-hungry race the book, with its infinite capacity for telling tales, old and new, to the grown-up children of the race.

But from Guttenberg's time to Edison's Man had found no new medium through which his eternal craving for stories could be assuaged. Literature and the drama, despite the impetus vouchsafed to them by the printing-press, are of aristocratic origin and have failed to adapt themselves whole-heartedly to the broadening tendencies and demands of the age. Democracy needed a new approach to the romance of existence, an approach that the millions could make without too great a sacrifice, and, lo, the movies blazed the way to it, despite the fact that their advance guard was for the most part unworthy of the high mission that chance had thrust upon it. These pioneers had in their hands the fifth device which Man has found for satisfying his soul's appetite for inspiring tales, more universal in its appeal than the tongue, the play, the novel or the poem, and many of them degraded it, alienating in the beginning those conservative, constructive forces in the community which have only recently come to the assistance of the screen.

† Wells and Van Loon, each in his own interesting way, have told us recently the tragi-comic story of

Man's evolution from slime to Shakespeare. On a large canvas it is the same picture that the movie presents in miniature from grime to Griffith. The great weakness of the motion picture industry throughout its formative years, a weakness still too much in evidence, is at the top and not at the bottom. The movies for years lost the support of the more enlightened classes of the community not because camera-men, carpenters, electricians and stage hands were not competent but because the powers in control of the completed output, the "bosses" of the new industry, failed to make the best use of the power that had come to them.) Says the producer who recently made his public confession through the pages of *Collier's Weekly*:

The directors were hard to deal with. They reflected the one greatest fault of the entire industry: they knew not that they knew not. Without adequate background, for the most part, without adequate training or knowledge of human character, without even a rudimentary philosophy or idealism, or sense of real values, to qualify them for leadership, they were given money and authority and power and told to make films for the multitude. Surrounded by minor sycophants, they soon came to believe themselves almost above criticism. A sincere critic was more apt than not to be regarded as an enemy.

There is something grimly ludicrous in the fact that for years after the screen had proved con-

clusively that the race had finally found an effective new method of telling stories more widely appealing, more direct in its methods than the play, the novel or the poem, the courts of last resort dominating the output of the films were composed largely of men without sufficient education to appraise the value, or lack of value, of the scenarios upon which, in the last analysis, depended the success or failure of their ventures. They seemed to be ignorant of, or indifferent to, the illuminating generalization to be adduced from the history of literature that there is nothing too good for the masses, that that which survives in letters the blue pencil of posterity is the best, not the mediocre or the worst. Had they found themselves several centuries ago in the Mermaid Tavern at London, they would have turned their backs upon Will Shakespeare and Ben Jonson and hurried out to the inn-yard to hobnob with the stable-boys. And the tragic feature of the situation lay in the fact that for a long period the autocrats of the screen failed to realize that a scenario can not rise higher than its source, that you can't get blood out of a stone, nor a screen masterpiece out of a cub office-boy.

But though these powers behind the films were for a long period blindly, and often disastrously, indifferent to their highest interests in connection with



the sources from which they obtained the stories their new tale-teller told to the millions, they displayed an enthusiastic admiration for astronomy. They studied the stars. Would a given matinee-idol "screen well?" Would a certain popular actress endure the searching ordeal of the camera? If they would, the public would flock to the movie's box-office even though the scenario writers had done their worst. Followed an era of star-gazing upon the part of the movie fans and of slow but certain enlightenment upon the part of the directors and producers. The latter discovered after a time that the fame of an actor is no safeguard against the destructive influence of a structurally poor picture-drama. They gradually had glimmerings of a basic truth, knowledge of which in the past would have saved countless theatrical managers from bankruptcy, namely, that, as Shakespeare sapiently remarked, "the play's the thing!" The telling of a story either on the stage or on the screen is a justifiable venture, as a very wise and rather jaded public knows, only if that story possesses certain elements that make it as a tale worth while. Even Douglas Fairbanks would score a failure in a dramatization of the multiplication-table.

But ordinary horse sense was acquired only slowly by the movies. It is an amazing story of stupidity,

reckless expenditure of money, emphasis in the wrong place, exploitation of stars out of their legitimate orbit, appeals to the lowest passions in human nature; of tragic failures and inexplicable, actually laughable, successes, of cities built and abandoned, of fortunes made and lost, of a new, marvellous, mysterious art in the making—this tale of the kinetoscope in search of its kingdom. But it is worth telling for many reasons, not the least of which is that the coming of the screen into its own has had, and is having, a disintegrating effect upon the commercialized stage. What the ultimate outcome of this iconoclastic influence of the movie upon the stage is likely to be is a subject that must be reserved for a later chapter, but it is enlightening, in connection with the foregoing review of what may be called the fly-by-night era of the films, to glance at what has been happening to the American theatre during the years in which the picture palaces have been rising from the slums to the avenues.

Walter Pritchard Eaton in *Scribner's Magazine* for November, 1922, says:

As a means of supplying drama to America as a whole our commercialized professional theatre has broken down. The reasons need not concern us here. They are many, no doubt. One, of course, is the rise of the motion pictures, which are cheaper to present and to witness,

and which enable the local theatre manager to keep his house open six or seven days in the week. Another reason is the increased cost of transportation. Another reason is the complication of modern life, even in the "provinces," so that the theatre, having to compete against other attractions (or distractions), no longer appeals so universally, or at any rate no longer finds all the people with the surplus cash to patronize it at the excessive modern scale of prices.

Later on in the essay quoted above its author speaks of himself as one of those "who love the drama and believe the movies a mean and stupefying substitute for its imaginative and intellectual appeal." If Mr. Eaton's opinion of the screen, as thus forcibly expressed, is based upon its past, the past of a Prodigal Son utterly unworthy of the fatted calf, it is not, as the reader of what I have thus far written will admit, without reasonable justification. But is not the present of the movies encouraging, is not their future promising? Succeeding chapters of this book will, I hope, go to prove that Mr. Eaton is too hasty in assuming that eventually the screen may not atone for any seeming damage it may have done to the stage.



## CHAPTER V

### THE MOVIE DEVELOPS A CONSCIENCE

*Grows up in the Slums—Used and Abused as a Money-Getter—Goes from Bad to Worse—Will Hays Called to the Rescue—Pulpit, Press and Playwrights Thunder Against it—The Responsibility of the Public—The Light in the Darkness.*



## CHAPTER V

### THE MOVIE DEVELOPS A CONSCIENCE

Not long ago the good people of Stratford-on-Avon, England, arose in their might, held a great mass meeting, and decreed that Shakespeare's birthplace should not be desecrated by the movies. Lacking sufficient clairvoyance to realize that possibly the motion picture of the near future, with its natural colors and its synchronization of movement with the tones of the human voice, may be destined to give Shakespeare a new lease of life and a larger public than he has hitherto possessed, the Stratford-on-Avonites were not without justification for the protest they registered against the more or less disreputable pictures that threatened to invade a shrine hitherto dedicated to the loftiest achievement the realm of the drama can boast. But Shakespeare's birthplace will see the day when its inhabitants will repent of the narrow-mindedness they have shown as regards the movies.

It is not for us Americans, however, to jeer at Stratford-on-Avon for its aggressive conservatism.

Our immediate ancestors blocked the wheels of progress in many mischievous, if not laughable, ways. The School Board of Lancaster, Ohio, adopted in 1826 the following resolution: "Such things as railroads are impossibilities and rank infidelity. If God had designed that His intelligent creatures should travel at the frightful speed of fifteen miles per hour by steam, He would clearly have foretold it through His holy prophets." The advent of the bath-tub, destined to be one of the crowning glories of America, was denounced by our medical men as a menace to the public health. Philadelphia, Pa., in 1843, endeavored by ordinance to prohibit all bathing between the months of November and March. Boston, Mass., in 1845, made bathing, except when prescribed by a physician, unlawful, and, at about the same time, Virginia put a tax of thirty dollars a year upon every bath-tub in a commonwealth that can claim to be the cradle of American liberty!

Whatsoever is new under the sun must fight for its place in the sun. For centuries the printing-press had to struggle for freedom against powerful restrictive influences that looked upon it as "an agent of the Devil." The telegraph, telephone, bicycle, automobile and wireless have all had their bigoted opponents, who feared that the broadening of humanity's contacts would become an increasing menace to



their own narrow beliefs and habits. Is it strange, then, that the movie, a new form of art qualified to make an instant appeal to both the good and the bad in human nature, should have had, at the outset of its career, a hard struggle to justify itself to the more conservative elements of the community? Bad boy that he was in his earlier years, the movie made it difficult for a public largely puritanical in its origins and tendencies to believe that the youngster could be reformed, that he had in him untried and unmeasurable powers for upward progress, that he was a prodigal son of Art and Science fated to exercise a controlling influence upon the destinies of the race.

However, there is an element in the make-up of the American people that leads it, even at the eleventh hour, to institute reforms whenever an institution seemingly worth saving must either be heroically treated or permitted to go completely to the dogs. There came a time when negro slavery must be destroyed if our Federal Constitution was to survive. At an enormous cost of life and treasure, the blacks were freed and the Union preserved. It became apparent recently to the American public that there were destructive influences at work within our three most popular forms of amusement, that our stage, our base-ball diamond and our movie-screen

were in jeopardy from internal perils, as were our governmental institutions in the early sixties.

What Judge Landis is endeavoring to do for our national game and Augustus Thomas for our stage is, in a general way, what Will H. Hays has been called upon to effect in the field of the motion picture. For a quarter of a century the movies in America, if not going from bad to worse had shown no marked signs of repentance for their early indiscretions. Cut-throat competition had long exercised its evil influence upon the industry and the law of the jungle had prevailed in its financial affairs. How this new commercial activity, despite its unbusinesslike methods, its apparent disregard of the economic laws that are said to underlie all competitive industries, and its seemingly happy-go-lucky indifference to the multiplication-table actually forged its way upward until it placed itself high on the list of the business enterprises of this country is a marvel and a mystery that only financial wizards could explain.

When Will H. Hays resigned as Postmaster General of the United States to enter, in a position of commanding influence, the motion-picture field he became an important factor in an industry whose growth has been one of the marvels of the world's commercial history. It was no longer a peripatetic gambler, out-at-heels one day and affluent the next,

but a vast business enterprise sufficiently prosperous to afford the luxury of a general house-cleaning. It is easier for the well-to-do to be respectable than for the down-and-outs, and the movies had reached a point financially when, without disastrous monetary sacrifice, they could essay the task of shortening their list of sins of omission and commission.

Going to the root recently of the new influences at work in the motion picture realm, and of his official connection with them, Hays said:

There has been some query as to just what this effort which the industry is making at this time is all about. It is simply that those men who make and distribute pictures have associated themselves to do jointly those things in which they are mutually but non-competitively interested, having as the chief purposes of such association two great objectives—and I quote verbatim from the formal articles of association, which have been filed in the office of the Secretary of State at Albany, N. Y.: “Establishing and maintaining the highest possible moral and artistic standards in motion picture production and developing the educational as well as the entertainment value of the motion picture.”

Later on in this book, we shall have occasion to refer in detail to what Hays and his colleagues have accomplished in their efforts to improve the tone of the movies. But just here it is well to direct the course of our narrative into the two channels referred

to in the clause of the producers' agreement above quoted, following the flood of movies devoted to mere amusement for awhile with searching eyes, and later on making a survey of the rapidly broadening stream of pictures designed for educational purposes. From the latter, perhaps, it may be expedient for us to go forward with some confidence toward a more minute consideration of the dynamics lurking in the screen for the furtherance of a method of world-wide enlightenment that may eventually save civilization from the disintegrating forces by which, both externally and internally, it is menaced.

"The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world" is a sweeping generalization intended by the poet to be a compliment to motherhood. Whether it is a compliment or a condemnation depends wholly upon one's point of view regarding the world. If the world is worth saving, the hand that rocks the cradle is worthy of all honor; if it isn't, then motherhood has been unjustifiably glorified. Believing, personally, that the human race is not without many reasonable claims to salvation, we turn curiously to the movies in their capacity as a public amusement to see whether, leaving their educational function for further consideration, they display as a pastime anything that looks like a gleam of hope for the regeneration of the race.

Have we, in fact, cause for optimism regarding the future of the amusement screen? We find to-day the press, the pulpit and the playwrights denouncing the shortcomings of the movies, chastising their secret faults and their open transgressions; editors, preachers, dramatists posing as Savonarolas at a spiritual crisis in the career of a young but alarmingly potent world-power. These are portents in the sky that promise well for the future of the screen. If our leading thinkers, writers and publicists, yes, and picture producers, were indifferent to the sins of omission and commission attributable for a quarter of a century to the movie its case would be hopeless. But it is worth saving, as the best minds in our country well know, and the criticism that it is always undergoing is a most encouraging phenomenon.

The regeneration of the movies must be both through external and internal sources. A producer who recently relieved his over-burdened soul in *Collier's Weekly* puts the whole matter in a nut-shell when he says:

We must have better pictures. And to get them we need these two things: inside the industry, the higher standards and leadership that can only come in with intelligent capital; and outside the industry, the support and encouragement of such good pictures as are already made. We of the motion-picture industry who stand for more intelligent pictures can only provide them if you on

the outside, in addition to criticising in no uncertain terms the stupid films that offend you, will take the trouble to hunt up, and go to see, and boost, the photo-plays that are good enough to merit your interest. When you do that we can have better movies.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MOVIE AND THE LIBRARY

*Its Rise from Mush to Masterpieces—Its Debt to D. W. Griffith—"The Birth of a Nation"—A New Way to Tell Old Tales—"The Three Musketeers"—"The Count of Monte Cristo"—"The Four Horsemen"—How Book-Worms May Renew their Youth.*





## CHAPTER VI

### THE MOVIE AND THE LIBRARY

DR. JEKYLL has begun belatedly to make his elevating influence felt in the movies. Press, pulpit, producers, are backing him in his fight against Mr. Hyde. But the latter seems to be a psychological cat with nine lives. The power which he has exercised for evil in the realm of the photoplay for a quarter of a century he refuses to relinquish without a fight, and an immediate and complete victory for Dr. Jekyll only the most optimistic dare to predict.

Look at a list of movie titles recently compiled by a somewhat cynical observer desirous of proving his proposition that for one photoplay worthy of approval the screen shows a score whose appeal is only to either the depraved or the unintelligent: "Only a Shop-girl," "The Lure of Broadway," "More to be Pitied than Scorned," "The Darling of the Rich," "Deserted at the Altar," "The Woman Gives," "Thorns and Orange Blossoms," "The

Curse of Drink," "How Women Love," "From Rags to Riches." Month after month, year after year, the type of mind that considers Laura Jean Libbey's novels admirable dominates too large a percentage of the output of the movie studios. The dime-novelish taint that was placed upon the screen at the outset of its career has been until recently only a shade lighter than it was in the beginning.

An old fight is being waged upon a new battleground. Generation after generation the so-called "elevation of the stage" has been a project dear to the hearts of many worthy men and women. The scope of the age-long engagement between the powers of darkness and the powers of light to dominate the drama has been vastly enlarged, and while the adherents of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are still in conflict for possession of the stage, their multiplied cohorts are also fighting tooth and nail to put good or evil, God or the Devil, progress or retrogression, civilization or its opposite, in control of the screen. In other words, both the stage and the photoplay are outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual combat the outcome of which is to determine the question whether mankind's future course is to be upward or downward. For this reason the screen, appealing to a larger clientèle than is influenced by the stage, and one more in need of the uplift that may

save humanity from a return to barbarism, becomes logically an object worthy of the most earnest consideration and study by all those of us who believe that Man does not live by bread alone, that the soul of the race can be saved if the various media for impressing it are purged of their evil influences. If it is true that there are sermons in stones, it follows, as the night the day, that there may lurk within the dynamics of the screen the possibility of divine revelations. For be it said right here, the first universal language will be capable ultimately of a saving grace to the race only if it finds a message to deliver to humanity that is not of the earth earthy. It's the man behind the gun who wins battles. It will be the prophet and seer and poet behind the screen who may eventually bring about the triumph of mankind over the powers of darkness. But when? That is the question. If those in control of the screen to-day should see a group of seers, prophets and poets invading their stronghold there would be something doing most detrimental to the dignity of the interlopers. > The camera might, in fact, catch a film, to be subsequently entitled "High-brows Bounced from a Studio," that would tickle the eyes of millions of groundlings. In short, the real power and glory of the screen are still concealed in the womb of Time. But their advent and their triumph are inevitable.

Otherwise, a polyglot world would be doomed to go eventually to the dogs—a racial cataclysm too horrible to be contemplated.

Let us look more in detail into the data which furnish reason for the hope expressed above that the screen may eventually fulfill its loftiest mission to mankind. What is there in the phenomena at present manifested in the realm of the movies that justifies our optimism? Suppose we turn first to D. W. Griffith's "The Birth of a Nation," recently dubbed by a noted critic "a celluloid *Peter Pan* which will never grow old." Year after year this early and revolutionary achievement of a far-sighted producer finds a new and enthusiastic public, opening the eyes, as it did at the outset, of despondent doubters to the possibilities of the screen as a dignified and uplifting interpreter of significant crises in the history of a people. Griffith's "Birth of a Nation" was also the birth of a new era for the screen.

I have taken the liberty above to refer to my early inclination to become a movie fan, to my disgust and revolt as the screen for years failed to show regard for its higher possibilities, and to my comparatively recent renewal of a hope that had been almost destroyed by the photoplay's youthful indiscretions—to use a term rather mild and inadequate. I am

sure that I shall speak of an experience that came to a large number of Americans, who had given up the movies as hopeless, when I say that "The Birth of a Nation" revived in me the conviction that the screen has before it a great future, a splendid mission, a message to deliver to humanity that may atone eventually for its juvenile sins of omission and commission. For the first time, so far as I was concerned, this Griffith picture revealed to me a fact, of which I had long been vaguely conscious, that the screen was not inherently a medium for pandering to the grossest passions in human nature, for visualizing merely the social phenomena that years ago gave to the Jack Harkaway stories and the *Police Gazette* their vogue. D. W. Griffith had put into concrete form a conception of the movies as a vehicle of combined entertainment and enlightenment that had, for the first time, made all things worth while possible to the screen. In that corner of the Temple of Fame dedicated to the real benefactors of the latest, and probably the last, method of telling great stories to a tale-loving race, to the names of Muybridge, Edison, Eastman and Paul must, in all justice, be added the name of Griffith. And there are other producers worthy of mention in this connection. Rex Ingram, who gave us "The Four Horsemen" and "The Prisoner of Zenda"; William de Mille, whom we

have to thank for "Clarence" and "Grumpy"; Fred Niblo, who screened "The Famous Mrs. Fair" and "Blood and Sand," come to mind as among those who have seen, as has Griffith, the higher possibilities of the movie.

Of course, we have with us always the carper and the skeptic, the pessimist who argues that one swallow doesn't make a summer, and that Will H. Hays, capable of organizing victory for the Republican Party and of improving our Postal Service, is essaying an impossible task when he endeavors to widen and make permanent the loftier scope that Griffith and other praiseworthy producers have given to the screen. But these atrabilious knockers, short-sighted, narrow-minded, and unimaginative, have failed to take a bird's-eye view of the varied influences and enterprises now in action with the avowed purpose of perpetuating the impetus given to the better type of photoplay by the permanent success of "The Birth of a Nation."

Cannot even the most uncompromising pessimist admit that from those pioneer days when a crude scenario written by a cub office-boy was screened, for want of better material at hand, to the present moment when there is nothing too majestic in the imaginings of master-fictionists to deter the camera, become a dramatist, from making use thereof, there

has been an upward trend of the movies that is not merely encouraging but intoxicating? There may be, here and there, of course, a man of letters, not sufficiently broadened by his wide reading, who considers the screening of an immortal novel by Dumas, Dickens, Victor Hugo, or other wonder-worker in narrative literature, a kind of sacrilege which he will always refuse to countenance. To him the Robin Hood of song and story is a revered personage upon whom Douglas Fairbanks has cast of late something of a slight. Let Alfred Noyes write musical verse about the picturesque bandits of Sherwood Forest, but, in the name of the Great God of Letters, don't allow the new art that the screen has made possible lay profane hands upon a hero whom Literature adopted long ago!

Little good will it do to their ridiculous cause, of course, for lettered reactionaries at this late day to attempt to protect the library from the scenario-writer. The screen has an insatiable maw for dramatic tales, old and new, and more and more, as time passes, will the telling of tales in the universal language of the eye become a factor in race-enlightenment.

Nor is the screen really committing sacrilege in making use of the literary achievements of master tale-tellers. Since the movies first began to present

photoplays based upon the world's great novels, there has been a constantly increasing demand at our circulating libraries for the works of worth-while authors possessing the narrative gift. The telephone actually increased the vogue of the telegraph. The wireless is enlarging the working-field of the telephone. By the same token, the screen is not narrowing but broadening the realm of letters. The appeal that it makes to countless millions who have been hitherto indifferent to, or ignorant of, the outstanding achievements of our great imaginative writers is a new and potent factor in the intellectual and spiritual life of the people.

Furthermore, the movie, in its traffic with the best in fiction, is of service to the man of letters who is sufficiently open-minded to welcome new contacts with old masterpieces. The screen does not merely bring great stories down to the masses, it frequently revivifies the enthusiasm of the aging and jaded book-worm for great stories. Is it disloyalty to my degree of Doctor of Humane Letters to confess that within the year my youth has been temporarily renewed for a few hours as I watched the screen telling me in a new way Dumas's stories of "The Three Musketeers" and "The Count of Monte Cristo"? Would I not be a hopeless literary snob if I refused to admit that I derived pure and un-



adulterated joy from the unfolding before my eyes of half-forgotten tales which had been among the keenest delights of my romance-loving boyhood? If this be treason, at all events it's honesty. I have acquired the habit of late of patronizing the theatre that advertises a picture-play derived from some novel, old or new, and recounts, by means of the silent drama, a story worthy of repetition.

While on this phase of my general subject, I find that I can go conscientiously further than I have above and assert that the screen may, in certain instances, present an author's narrative with even greater impressiveness than his printed book was able to compass. "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" was, to the minds of many competent critics, a much overrated novel. It displayed not only the merits of Ibañez as a story-teller but also his grave defects. His tale was rather clumsily developed, and its interest was not cumulative. It is hardly going too far to say that the author narrowly avoided handicapping his achievement by an anti-climax.

But the screen presentation of "The Four Horsemen" was absolutely free from the shortcomings above ascribed to the novel. Not only was it marvellously effective in its appeal to the eye, but the logical and dramatic unfolding of the basic story

was a striking revelation of the valuable service that an expert scenario-writer may render, now and then, to the professional writer of novels. For the many outrages that fictionists have received at the hands of the film-makers some atonement is offered at times, and "The Four Horsemen" as a photoplay proves that the pot may sometimes be unjust in calling the kettle black.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The screen may commit—yes, frequently has committed—mayhem, assault and battery and actual murder upon the revered form of some great masterpiece of narrative literature; but you who are well-read, you who love the "old melodious lays that softly melt the ages through," and the tales told by the great romancers, pause before you recklessly indict a new art, groping its way toward a full realization of its possibilities and powers. By turning your haughty back upon a photoplay made from some famous novel, you may conceivably lose an opportunity for drinking again from that Fountain of Eternal Youth which you, more fortunate than Ponce de Leon, discovered one day in a library when you were still a boy.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MOVIE'S APPETITE FOR PLOTS

*Ravenous for Screen-Food—A Ghoul Exhausting the Grave-Yards—Contemporary Novelists Fail to Supply the Demand—A New Art, a New Technique and a New Possibility—Scenario-Writing To-Day and To-Morrow—Will the Screen Beget its own Hugos and Barries?*



## CHAPTER VII

### THE MOVIE'S APPETITE FOR PLOTS

THE need of motion-picture producers for new raw material for the screen grows apace, and is constantly harder to satisfy. Otherwise, the camera would not at present be endeavoring to make pictures of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. It is rumored that Bergson, Freud and Coué have been approached by hard-pressed producers on the subject of their movie picture rights. The dilemma confronting the photoplay promoters is more serious than that which for generations past has worried the theatrical managers. The appeal of the dramatist is to tens of thousands of people, that of the scenario-writer to millions. It doesn't require much of a head for mathematics to realize that the food-supply of the screen is much more quickly exhausted than that of the stage.

In so far as the libraries are concerned, the movies have begun to exhaust the resources vouchsafed to them by the writers of the past. Their fate is like

that which menaces our nation in connection with our forests. For many years we have been cutting down our trees without taking thought for the morrow by providing for a new growth of forest where our improvident axe has had its wanton way. The screen has recklessly leveled both its giant sequoias and its scrub-oaks and finds itself in sore straits for timber that will stand the strain it puts upon it.

The younger generation of fiction-writers are not furnishing the studios with material with which to repair the gaps made as the romances of the past are, one by one, fed to the capacious maw of the hungry screen. Mark Twain asserted that there were only seven original stories in existence—or was it thirty?—and inferred that the latest novel by the most original of contemporary writers must be, of necessity, a variation upon one of these ancient, basic yarns. There still exists the suspicion that our greatest humorist was “spoofing us,” as an Englishman would say. But the output of fiction to-day, both in America and Europe, leads to the conclusion that our imaginative writers were not born to the purple as master plot-makers. They repeatedly shock us, sometimes disgust us, often interest and amuse us, constantly furnish us with food for reflection and apprehension, and once in awhile startle us by their brilliancy—but, for the most part, their

novels do not "screen well." They lack, as a class, the absorbing narrative interest that makes tales like "Monte Cristo," "Les Miserables," "Lorna Doone," "A Tale of Two Cities," and many other masterpieces of the older generation of romancers, effective on the screen. They seem to be influenced by the fear that Mark Twain was right in his depressing generalization, and that it is better to put forth a novel with little or no plot than to be accused of employing modern methods for telling an ancient tale.

From these modern fictionists the screen asks for bread and they give it a stone—sometimes a precious or semi-precious stone, but not what the newest and hungriest of the arts needs for its continued sustenance. This is the more remarkable because of the fact that we are living in an age more stimulating to the imaginative mind than any of its predecessors. We are called upon to rebuild a shattered world, to salvage what was of value in a dethroned civilization and to reconstruct the affairs of mankind upon new bases.

It is no figure of speech [remarks President Harding, in his recent message to Congress], to say that we have come to the test of our civilization. The world has been passing—is to-day passing—through a great crisis. The conduct of war itself is not more difficult than the solution of the problems which necessarily follow.

In other words, the human race since 1914 has been going through unprecedented experiences which of necessity furnish material for the teller of romances, the builder of plots, the novelist, the dramatist, the scenario-writer, richer, more varied, more illuminating than has been hitherto vouchsafed to imaginative genius. But, as Virgil once grumbled, "the mountains were in labor and brought forth a little mouse." Science is going forward to-day from one startling triumph to another, the creative imaginations of its greatest minds rising to adequate control of the new and splendid opportunities recent progress has brought to them. But Art, especially that field of it reserved to the origination of dramatic tales, seems to be suffering under a blight that forces it to give birth either to monstrosities or to weaklings, and to clothe its worthless offspring in garments fashioned to delude the weak-minded into believing that what is offensive to common-sense and good taste is necessarily a child of genius. The screen, with fame and fortune to bestow upon the teller of tales, is forced to become a ghoul haunting old graveyards at night because the living are unworthy of a great opportunity, because the fictionist of to-day goes far afield in quest of strange gods instead of worshipping at the eternal and inspiring altars which gave inspiration to the master-romancers of the past.



The situation confronting the photoplay producer at this moment, as outlined above, bids fair to become worse rather than better, unless some radical solution of the problem dealing with the constant renewal of worthy dramatic material for the screen can be found. The most disreputable type of movie-drama has fallen into a permanent condition of innocuous desuetude, in so far, at least, as the vast majority of picture-theatres are concerned. It has been replaced by photoplays of a much higher order, until to-day the screen is engaged in giving to the public splendid presentations of great masterpieces of fiction and drama entitling it to approval and sympathetic encouragement. But you can't eat your cake and have it too. You can't feed an audience of several millions daily with the cream of the world's imaginative literature without shortly resorting to skimmed milk and eventually coming to the end of your lacteal resources.

The point toward which we have been driving is this: The movie, with its stupendous resources of capital, its enterprising and ambitious personnel, its right to believe, through its experiences of a quarter of a century, that no obstacle can check its triumphant progress, is like an army that can conquer the world only on the condition that its commissariat solves the problem of food-supply. It is possible, of

course, that when the screen has fully mastered the technique involved in color reproduction and the synchronization of voice and action the photoplays now attracting the movie public may receive a new lease of life. We who have enjoyed, for example, "The Count of Monte Cristo" on the screen, despite the fact that neither color, sound nor perspective assisted the development of Dumas's absorbing story, would be inclined to give it our attention again when Edmond Dantes is no longer clad in black-and-white and has found his voice. But it is best to let the marvels of the future take care of themselves. For the present, we must confine ourselves to the screen as it is, and as it seems likely to remain for an indefinite time to come.

However, there must come a crisis in the future, under present conditions, when the movie producers will be hampered by a lack of screen material unless they have been far-sighted enough to provide against this contingency. There are among them forward-looking exploiters of the latest story-telling medium who have formulated, in rather a vague and general way, a possible solution of the problem confronting them. They are encouraging writers possessing imagination and originality to take part in the development of a new form of the dramaturgic art which makes direct

rather than indirect use of the screen. In other words, the movie displays a growing tendency to demand from creative minds its own special requirements; to turn, so to speak, away from the libraries to the librettists. Eventually, it is safe to assert, there will come a day when scenario-writers will not spend a large part of their time listening to echoes for inspiration but will beget screen plays from internal instead of external impulses. In a not distant future, it is reasonable to predict, the movie will, of dire necessity, develop its own type of dramatic story-tellers whose fecundity may make Mark Twain's assertion, quoted above, seem more than ever humorous rather than accurate. The movie must do this or run out eventually of screen material, for the dead tale-tellers have little more to offer it, and contemporary novelists have not, from the picture producers' standpoint, risen to a great opportunity.

Of course, the future of the movie, no matter how glorious it may be, must be, of necessity, circumscribed, as are fiction and the drama, by the basic limitations applying to human passions. Love, hatred, loyalty, jealousy, ambition, generosity, cupidity, philanthropy, selfishness, and the other dominating motives impelling men and women to beget the raw material of drama will not be increased

in number because the screen has developed a new method for telling tales to a story-loving race. While the widely-accepted generalization that human nature never changes may not be true, it can not be questioned that the scenario-writer of the future will be forced to deal with the same manifestations of Man's psychic make-up which engaged the attention of Æschylus, Sophocles, Molière, Shakespeare, and the lesser dramatists. But as the nations to-day are striving to find a new way to pay old debts, so is the screen seeking a new way to present the eternal dramatic clash of old passions. As the kinetoscope thirty years ago begot a novel form of amusement, so is its successor, the movie screen, bringing into being a new type of dramatic technique. The scenario-writer is something besides a combination of story-teller and playwright. He is experimenting in a youthful artistic medium, whose resources and possibilities are as yet only partially revealed, and he has become a pioneer in a realm that belongs to a kind of specialist bearing resemblance to both the novelist and dramatist but differing from them in ways peculiarly his own.

The future welfare of the screen, in so far as it is confined to the amusement field, depends largely upon how stimulating to men and women possessing creative imagination this new method of tale-telling,

rapidly developing its own technique, may prove to be. Will the movie produce its own Hugos, Sardous, Stevensons, Barries,—perhaps, its Shakespeare—who, fascinated by the most democratic method yet devised for genius to appeal to the masses, shall eschew the old methods for telling new tales and reach immortality by means of the photoplay scenario? If you who have read the preceding chapters of this book, believe, as does the writer, that the only universal language yet devised by Man is the most important contribution to the spiritual resources of the race that has been made for centuries, you will be inclined to hope that scenario-writing for the screen may become an occupation worthy, in succeeding generations, of the exclusive devotion of many imaginative creators.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MOVIE AND THE CONTINUITY WRITER

*The Screen Demands the Inevitable—Movie Audiences no Longer Easily Fooled—They can Tell a Hawk from a Heronshaw—The Value of the Screen as a Mirror of Life—Man's First Universal Means to Self-Knowledge.*





## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MOVIE AND THE CONTINUITY WRITER

WAS it Brander Matthews, Henry Van Dyke, Richard Burton or Clayton Hamilton who asserted that any given novel must be placed in the category of either the Impossible, the Improbable or the Inevitable? Whoever it was, he helped to clarify the thinking of any writer who may find himself dealing with the topic of screen tales and tale-tellers, of the movie drama and the continuity writer. Every art has its own special sins of omission and commission. The poet who tells a story in verse may take liberties denied to the novelist relating the same story. The continuity writer who places this tale upon the screen enjoys certain prerogatives denied to either the poet or the novelist, but he is also bound by limitations and restrictions inherent in the medium through which he is working as a raconteur.

It is not easy to fool a movie audience in regard to the Inevitable. Jove may nod now and then when he is engaged upon an epic poem or a romantic

or realistic novel but he must remain wide awake when he is writing scenarios for the screen. Scott, Bulwer-Lytton, Charles Read, Dumas, Victor Hugo, Thackeray may "get away," to use a slang phrase, with a lapse of memory, an injected anachronism, even the reintroduction of a character who has been killed off in an earlier chapter. The impressive flow of their narrative, their charm of style, and the tendency of a reader to forget minor details in what he has already read of a tale, have enabled the great story-tellers to commit strange, almost unbelievable, blunders in the unfolding of their narratives without seriously marring the value of their work. But when a tale-teller is employing the movie screen he can not afford to take liberties with the basic proposition that seeing is *not* believing unless there is the logic of the Inevitable in the sequence of the events portrayed.

The above is asserted under a full realization of the fact that for years the story-telling films tried to the breaking-point the patience of their more enlightened supporters by frequently sacrificing the Inevitable to the Expedient, allowing the logic of events to go to the bow-wows because a reel must be cut, or a movie star exploited, or a scene over-emphasized for the sake of its advertising value. Lincoln asserted that you can't fool all the people all the time, but

at one period it seemed as if the screen were stubbornly endeavoring to perform this miracle. A picture-play, whatsoever might have been its origin, succumbed, as a rule, to a tendency to underrate the general intelligence, the power of memory, and the knowledge of life and human nature possessed by the average movie audience.

But times have changed. Continuity—that is, the spinal-column of a picture play,—manages, for the most part, to keep the cervical, dorsal and lumbar vertebræ of the narrative in a normal juxtaposition, with the result that dramatic monstrosities are gradually disappearing from the screen. It is still possible to fool some of the people all the time, but it no longer pays, so far as movie audiences are concerned, to throw common-sense into the discard when the screen essays to tell a dramatic story. Recently in a small city within a hundred miles of New York the proprietor of a motion-picture theatre spoke to me of a great change that he had observed of late in the attitude of his audiences toward the silent drama.

They won't stand for many things they overlooked a short time ago. They demand both logic and accuracy in our pictures. South Sea scenes must be taken in the South Seas and African wild beasts must be filmed in their native habitat or our patrons revolt. At the present

rate of progress, the next generation, through the aid of the screen, will become so worldly-wise that even county fairs will be made safe for the farmer.

There is much that is worth serious consideration in the above quoted opinion of one whose professional welfare depends upon the keenness of his judgment regarding the trend of public opinion in connection with the screen. Somewhat quaintly he gives expression to the conviction that the movie and its clientele react upon each other and that the general tendency of this mutual action and reaction has been toward the elevation of the screen and the enlightenment of its patrons. In this elevation of the screen the continuity writer has, of course, played a leading part. The time has gone by when he could recklessly substitute the Impossible or the Improbable for the Inevitable and retain his professional standing. That he has been guilty of sins of omission and commission, has shown at times a lack of imagination, and has frequently failed to conform to the axiom that a story, no matter through what medium it is told, must, to be effective, preserve to the end the element of suspense is undoubtedly true. The fact is that the ideal continuity writer is, as is the poet, born not made. The technique of scenario writing can be acquired by anybody with average intelligence but to employ it for the highest possible purposes of the

screen is to show the possession of something akin to genius. Such being the case, the law of the survival of the fittest, working out in the studios, has decreed that though many are called to continuity work but few are chosen in the end to lead the film drama toward the heights to which it is destined to attain.

Suspense! Ah, there's the rub! To tell a dramatic story by means of pictures to a miscellaneous collection of movie fans, wise in the niceties of this new method of narration, in such a way that the interest of the on-lookers is won at the outset, maintained throughout succeeding scenes, and intensified as the climax is reached, is to accomplish a feat requiring a combination of technical skill and imaginative inspiration that places a real triumph of the continuity writer's art high upon the list of worthwhile creative achievements.

That such a large percentage of picture plays have failed to satisfy the demand of audiences for drama that stresses the Inevitable, conforms to the logic underlying real life, and preserves to the final screen-curtain the suspense that it is the mission of dramaturgic art to beget is not strange, therefore, when we take into consideration the natural and acquired powers demanded of the ideal continuity writer. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that the scenario-maker has been, and will continue to be,

blamed for shortcomings of the screen that cannot be justly laid at his door. He is more or less at the mercy of the director and the film-cutter, a victim frequently of exigencies against which his devotion to the underlying principles of dramatic exposition cannot prevail. A picture play that may be effectively complete when presented in a metropolitan theatre may be so eviscerated for provincial use that the continuity writer, lauded in the cities, is often forced to undergo unjustified suburban censure. But, as is suggested in another chapter, the comparatively new art of the continuity writer is bound eventually to overcome its earlier handicaps and, in its bestowal upon the race of a novel medium through which creative genius can manifest itself, will beget a type of super-scenario-maker to which the screen's future splendid achievements must be, of necessity, largely due.

The meaning of life Man doesn't know. Art is, and always has been, Man's testimony to the fact that he believes that life has a meaning and that his quest for that meaning is not destined to be forever futile. Recently the race came into possession of what seemed to be at first a new toy, not to be taken too seriously, but worthy, as it presently appeared, of development as a most fascinating addition to our recreational resources. But of late

the public has begun to realize vaguely that the screen is becoming something of more vital importance to mankind than merely a plaything that serves only as a time-killer. The fact to which the provincial manager above quoted called my attention, namely, that movie audiences are constantly emphasizing their demand for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth possesses a significance that is entitled to the most earnest consideration. Is it possible that Man has come finally into possession of an art-form enabling him to come nearer to solving the riddle of the Sphinx we call Life than has been hitherto possible?

There will be those among my readers, I fully realize, who will feel that my inclination all through this book has been to take the screen too seriously, to overrate its psychical dynamics and to underrate its gross materialism, to prophesy for it a future that could be made possible only if producers became archangels and movie patrons pilgrims to a shrine where the soul of the race became no longer of the earth earthy. Well, so be it. Perhaps, as regards the subject in hand, I am allowing my naturally optimistic liver to dominate my habitually pessimistic brain. But neither I nor my critics will live long enough to know which of us was in the right. A conviction, nevertheless, has come to me of late

out of which I am sure that I shall never be shaken—namely, that when Man recently found a way to stop living, now and then, that he might look at life, he took the greatest step forward that he has ever taken toward becoming a philosopher. He pauses periodically in these days before a screen and sees, as he never did before, what manner of creature he is. By so doing, he must eventually attain to a self-knowledge such as he has hitherto craved but has not known how to acquire.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE MOVIE IMPROVES ITS MORALS

*War and Love Degraded—The Crook and the Vampire—Pursuers and Pursued—The Box-Office Finally Vindicates Dr. Jekyll—The Photoplay's Marvellous Future—Booths and Barrymores Pass, Shakespeare Remains—Survey of the Screen as an Amusement Concluded.*



## CHAPTER IX

### THE MOVIE IMPROVES ITS MORALS

FOR ages the interest of the individual in dramatic episodes in real life was in direct ratio to his propinquity to the locality in which these episodes occurred. Until recently, a civil war in China seemed to be of less significance to the average New Yorker than a Tong outbreak in Chinatown, just as to his ancestors Aaron Burr's treasonable schemes were of greater moment than Napoleon's efforts at world-dominion. But the New Yorker has learned, since 1914, that what happens in Peking or Canton may affect him more vitally than anything which may occur in Mott or Pell Street. Against his own volition he has become, perforce, a citizen of the world and is compelled to subscribe to Terence's dictum, sensationally delivered to the Romans centuries ago: "*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.*"

This change in the mental attitude of the average American toward what may be called the real

perspective of current events, a change that has had an effect upon the screen as a peripatetic journalist by making it constantly more cosmopolitan, has not as yet revolutionized its activities in its earlier and more important rôle as a photoplay producer. As a medium for drama the screen is only just beginning to break away from the influences that controlled it when it first set out on its career as a pioneer in a new art, namely, the silent presentation of plays and stories. It is still necessary for us who enjoy a photoplay of real merit to exercise care at the entrance to a movie theatre lest we be confronted presently by a screen drama unworthy the attention of intelligent observers. Why this deplorable situation continues to exist it is worth our while to consider.

There are those among the erudite who assert that the oldest of the arts is Poetry. Like Lord Byron, mankind "lisped in numbers, for the numbers came." Homer and his brother bards, Latin, Teutonic, Norse, twanged their lyres, harshly or majestically, as the case might be, in glorification of only two themes, namely, War and Love. And so was it later on with the troubadours and minnesingers, they harped and sang the splendors and the mysteries of combat and of passion. Long ago was Man's belligerency set to word-music and the martial hero owes to the poets the false and misleading radiance

that throughout the ages has surrounded his name and deeds. And when they sang of love it was the love of a Lochinvar for a maiden not of a Lincoln for a people.

The youngest of the arts, like the oldest, has confined itself practically to war and love. But the screen drama has been more reprehensible than poetry in that, in its youth, it has chosen to glorify the kind of warfare that is least worthy of public exploitation, namely, the eternal conflict that goes on between the lawless and the law-abiding, between the crook and the constable, between the underworld and the upper. Realizing that the scenario-writer, like the playwright, must base a dramatic story upon some kind of clash or combat, our photoplay producers for nearly a quarter of a century have permitted the screen to concern itself too often with a crude type of melodrama that was untrue to life and offensive to good taste, obtaining the clash essential to its being by the same methods employed by the dime-novelists of fifty years ago.

And as the screen depicted, in its quest for drama, a type of ignoble, petty warfare, so did it indulge in a debasing use of the passion of love in its early efforts to make financial hay while the camera clicked. The rake and the vampire, the seducer and the siren, the vicious and their victims defied in the movies

official sociological statistics and gradually led a large percentage of the public toward the belief, sub-conscious, perhaps, that the respectable element in our communities is wholly negligible, that the world is made up almost entirely of the pursuers and the pursued, with illicit love as the motive force. The Eighteenth Amendment to our Federal Constitution informed an amazed generation that we Americans are strongly influenced by an inherited puritanical strain; but while, as a nation, we were adopting Prohibition, we were flocking daily by the millions to gaze at photoplays sufficiently shocking to draw our forefathers protesting from their graves. Consistency is not a jewel possessed, as has been repeatedly proved since Cromwellian days, by the Puritan. When, in our beloved country, he gave up winking at the bar-tender he betook himself to the movies and winked at the bar-sinister. But his conscience troubled him, and presently he began to talk to his fellow-Roundheads about the shortcomings of the screen. The Puritans had triumphed recently over the saloon. Would it not be possible for them, they asked each other, to eliminate presently from the movie the debasing features that have disgraced its youth?

But where does liberty end and license begin? At what point does free speech change into unlawful

utterances? How many, and how drastic, should be our sumptuary laws? Where lies the golden mean between ultra-socialistic paternalism and that extreme of individualism for which the anarchists strive? These queries, all of which exercise a disquieting influence upon our national life, are of the same class to which the problem now confronting the producers of photoplays belongs. That the screen must repent and reform, must see to it that its maturity is less censurable than its youth, is a proposition accepted by both the producers and the public. But where shall the scenario-writer draw the line in his effort to make the second quarter-century of the movie less reprehensible than its first? It is a question hard to answer, but there is one illuminating fact that is gradually having its influence upon the output of the studios, namely, that a clean and decent photoplay is more likely to become a financial success than one which appeals to the baser passions of the public.

In this regard, history is but repeating itself. The most successful American plays, from the box-office standpoint, have been, for several generations past, those which eschewed the licentious and the immoral. And, by the same token, it is safe to predict that the movie fans of this country will continue to prefer Douglas Fairbanks in "Robin Hood" to Nazimova

in Oscar Wilde's "Salome." Leaving ethics wholly out of the discussion, and placing the problem strictly upon a business and financial basis, there seems to be overwhelming evidence to the effect that an investment in clean pictures is safer than in soiled.

Of course, the regeneration of the photoplay must be, of necessity, a slow process. We must look facts and figures in the face and admit at the outset that the millions of Americans who daily attend movie theatres are not, on the average, highly intellectual, nor over-prudish as critics. They pay their money to the box-office to be amused, not instructed nor uplifted, to get recreation rather than rescue. A stream cannot rise higher than its source, nor can a picture-play win success if it soars above the head and heart of the average movie fan. Until recently, the producers, as a class, underrated the intelligence of that head and the responsiveness of that heart to the highest that is in mankind's complicated make-up. One of them said to me recently that that cross-section of our American civilization represented by the young men drafted for the World War had proved, as statistics showed, that the percentage of illiteracy in this country is so great that a movie-manager who produced a really high order of photoplays was surely destined to "go broke." That his rivals in the screen drama have successfully controverted his



proposition by replacing, to their own advantage, the old salacious and nonsensical picture plays by screen dramas of a much higher type he would not acknowledge. His mind is of that pessimistic kind that despairs of the republic—and of civilization as a whole—because Tom, Dick and Harry, Fritz, Tony and Ivanovitch for a whole generation patronized unprotestingly the sort of mixed sentimental slush and moron-made melodrama which he, and his kind, served out to them. He failed wholly to realize that, despite the high percentage of illiteracy in the United States—nay, on account of it—it was his sacred duty to endeavor to raise the average of intelligence in our country instead of sending out photoplays that dragged it down to a lower level.

And “the play’s the thing!” as Shakespeare remarked long ago. The screen idol, like the old matinee idol, has been exploited and advertised and flattered, foisted upon an easily-misguided public, at the expense of the drama itself; and more than one short-sighted producer has lived to regret the day when he hitched his wagon, containing all his worldly goods, to a movie star instead of trusting his welfare to his scenario-writers. That there is light in the darkness a close observer of the present tendencies of the screen, so far as drama is concerned, must admit, but it will be a long time before photoplay

producers as a class grasp the underlying and immensely illuminating fact, broadly applicable to both the screen and the stage, that, while Booths and Barrymores come and go, Shakespeare goes on forever. In the last analysis, the screen and the stage are media for the telling of dramatic stories and their well-being, in the long run, depends not upon shooting-stars but upon planetary playwrights.

In approaching the conclusion of the first half of this series of articles which has given, inadequately and sketchily, a bird's-eye view of the past and present of the movie as a purveyor of amusement, the writer finds himself turning to other fields of endeavor in which the screen is pushing forward as a pioneer with the hope in his heart, amounting to a certainty, that the screen-drama in America is upon the threshold of a great and glorious future. Revolutionary changes in the photo-drama are being brought about by methods arousing intense scientific and technical interest. It has seemed best to postpone their consideration until later on, when we turn from the studios to the laboratories, from the scenario-writer to the surgeon, from the movie hero to the captain of industry in our effort to visualize the wide and growing field that the screen is conquering for its own. And the realm of movie endeavor into which we are now about to enter

is, to my mind, of greater interest and significance than that which we have been hitherto investigating. Mankind's toys do not possess for us the fundamental importance of our tools and our test-tubes.



## CHAPTER X

### THE MOVIE MAKETH—WHAT KIND OF A MAN?

*Pictures that Combine Instruction and Amusement—  
“Nanook of the North”—Passing Phases of Life Preserved  
for Posterity—African Big Game Screened for our Descend-  
ants—President Harding on the Movie’s Possibilities—  
Visualization Civilization’s One Best Bet.*



## CHAPTER X

### THE MOVIE MAKETH—WHAT KIND OF A MAN?

BEFORE going on to a discussion of the utilitarian as contrasted with the recreational functions of the movie, it seems advisable to consider for a moment a type of screen presentation that is both entertaining and educational, fascinating the observer by its dramatic presentation of the adventurous spirit that has forever urged mankind to dare the perils of the outlands while, at the same time, it preserves for posterity phases of wild life that may conceivably become obsolete in the near future. "Nanook of the North," depicting, as it does, the primitive but heroic existence of an Eskimo endeavoring to find shelter and sustenance for his family in the Arctic regions is an outstanding achievement in this bi-functional form of screen-picture. If, as Stefansson asserts, the far North is destined eventually to lure to its cold but stimulating embrace a much higher civilization than has hitherto existed near the Pole, Nanook and his kind are fated to succumb, despite the sterling qualities they have displayed in over-

coming the handicaps of their cruel environment, to adventurous pioneers from the South, bringing with them a greater menace to the Eskimos than that with which old Boreas has vainly threatened them for ages.

Belatedly, but with thrilling efficiency, the camera is giving to us and to our descendants pictures of savage and half-savage life against which the irresistible power of the regnant races of the earth has issued a decree of annihilation. The polar seas, the islands of the Pacific, the deserts, mountain-tops, jungles, are shown to us on the screen as they are to-day, as if this generation were frantically endeavoring to assure itself that this romantic planet of ours is not really doomed to become eventually as prosaic and uninteresting as Main Street.

In illustration of the above, permit me to quote here from an article of mine in a recent number of *The Independent*:

The call of the wild and the rattle of a Ford car are strangely incongruous sounds, but they have been dramatically brought together of late. Adventurous dare-devils in various parts of the world are using the camera to rescue from oblivion the vanishing fauna of the outlands. The defiant jungle surrenders unconditionally to the tin Lizzie. I recently spent an enjoyable and enlightening evening watching H. A. Snow hunting big game in Africa with his gun and his photographic apparatus



and repeatedly looking death in the face that posterity might possess a picture of the animal life under the equator that is destined presently to become obsolete. The lion, rhinoceros, elephant, giraffe, zebra, hippopotamus, wild buck, ostrich, baboon, camel, gnu were ours for a time to study at close range, revealed to us in their native habitat without the necessity upon our part of spending months in constant peril from heat, snakes, carnivora, fever, and other enemies which war against the white man in African wilds.

As I watched the screen that evening, my memory went back nearly half a century. It brought to my mind the picture of a boy curled up in a library chair and absorbed in the pages of Paul du Chaillu's book "Under the Equator," a book whose revelations of wild life in Africa subjected the author to a period during which he was suspected of being a Baron Munchausen, or, as we would say to-day, a Dr. Cook. There were skeptics who bluntly asserted that the French explorer had evolved the gorilla out of his own inner consciousness.

Eventually, of course, du Chaillu's veracity was established; but, victim as he was of the limitations of his generation, he could not at first furnish to the public convincing proof that his tales of adventure and discovery in the African jungle were founded upon fact. To-day the explorer, arctic or tropical, returns to civilization as to Missouri—prepared to show all scoffers that their incredulity is ridiculous. Defiantly he has turned a crank while sudden death from a polar bear or a jungle elephant is close at hand; and eventually the imminence of the peril, the suspense of a tragic moment, are within the power of the screen to transmit to wide-eyed audiences safely seated twenty thousand miles away from the scene of the thrilling episode!

As the camera is more thorough and convincing in its revelations of the drama of the jungle than is the pen so is it more extravagant in its use of the material that makes the wild life of the outlands interesting to the untravelled public. There may remain untamed animals in Africa that the Snows have not effectively screened, but a fair acquaintance with equatorial fauna leads me to the conclusion that the camera can afford now to rest upon its laurels in so far as the creatures of the jungle are concerned.

Omnivorous, insatiable, the screen is sending out its camera-men to all the corners of the known and the unknown earth, to the end that you and I may learn eventually every secret that our planet has hitherto concealed. The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—that's why Man, who has become a peripatetic photographer, is venturing to lands afar. And the public is glad to confer applause, and more material rewards, upon those who mirror for us some dramatic phase of life upon earth today especially if, as is the case with the big game of Africa, it bids fair to pass presently forever out of existence.

President Harding, whose present exalted position gives him unequalled facilities for observing the potential tendencies of the day, has become an enthusiastic believer in the uplifting possibilities that the screen has begun to manifest. Much of what we study in our youth, says the President, might be made dramatically interesting if we could see it. Next in value to studying history by the procedure of living through its epochs, its eras and its periods, would be to

see its actors and evolutions presented before our eyes. If we are to understand the present and attempt to conjecture the future, we need to know a good deal about the backgrounds of the past. The Europe of the later middle ages, of the period just before and at the beginning of the Renaissance, could be wonderfully portrayed in a series of pictures dramatizing "The Cloister and the Hearth." I do not know whether anybody reads "The Cloister and the Hearth" any more, but I am sure that one family with which I am pretty well acquainted would be glad to patronize a combination of picture serials and really intelligent talks with this story as the basis and with the purpose of giving a real conception and understanding of the Europe of that epoch.

Mr. Harding has grasped fully the significance of the motion picture in connection with the past, present, and future of the race. He has suggested the screening of Wells's "Outline of History" and of Van Loon's "Story of Mankind," and has called attention to the possibility that, under the direction of the Federal Bureau of Standards, films might be taken illustrating the fundamental principles of the science of geology. Realizing, as he does, that ignorance is the enemy democracy, in order to survive, must overcome, and that the surest safeguard to our institutions is enlightenment, President Harding has thrown himself wholeheartedly into that growing movement which is destined eventually, if Fate is kind to us, to make the motion picture

worthy in its achievements of the splendid possibilities that are within its grasp.

That potent, pushing, perverse offspring of the printing-press, the newspaper, has begun to realize that it can be no longer exclusively typographical but must become in part photographic. It is following in the footsteps of the screen in making use of the only universal language the ingenuity of Man has yet devised. A recent editorial in the *New York Tribune* says:

The *Tribune* was the first newspaper to adapt for journalistic purposes the printing of the half-tone photograph. The innovation started the rising flood of news-in-pictures which is so distinctive a feature of the American press of 1923. . . . Some of the events of the day's news can be visualized for the reader simply by the printed word. Others need the aid of a picture. Others still find presentation possible in a picture alone. . . . The universal appeal of pictures can be taken advantage of for sound informative and educational purposes, instead of for scandal and filth. Indeed, it should be so used, as the London *Times* and other conservative newspapers have realized through their daily pages of pictures.

“The universal appeal of pictures!” Mankind from the days when our ancestors sketched reindeer upon the walls of their caves has felt their appeal, but only recently has its universality become of crucial significance to the race. The printing-press,

as we realized despairingly in 1914, has failed to save civilization from its recurrent attempts at suicide. Men read and talked, and, then, as had their illiterate progenitors, grasped their weapons and went to fighting. Neither from books nor from debates has mankind in the mass grasped that enlightenment which often comes to individuals but which is not sufficiently wide-spread and compelling to defend the race from constant reversions to brutish manifestations.

And now comes visualization—in movie theatres, in newspapers, in schools, colleges, churches—to mould, for good or evil, the plastic soul of Man. What will the harvest be? Who can say? Francis Bacon asserted that “reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man.” Something more, as the centuries have proved, is necessary to make the human race what it should be. Is it not barely possible that some Bacon of the future will exultingly exclaim: “The screen maketh a civilized man!”?



## CHAPTER XI

### THE MOVIE AND THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

*The Screen Wins Powerful Friends—Societies Representing Sixty Million Americans Endorse it—Its Power for Good Recognized by Altruists—The Movie's Allies Mobilized—The New Art is Backed by Old Philanthropies.*





## CHAPTER XI

### THE MOVIE AND THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

THE conviction expressed at the end of the preceding chapter that in the screen civilization has finally found a medium through which Man's loftiest ideals, hopes, dreams, visions and good resolutions may find a way to fulfillment has been vouchsafed a new *raison d'être* of late, the importance of which can not be overrated. The existing reasons for the belief that the movie is to be a weapon wielded in the cause of righteousness against the powers of darkness were greatly increased in number and force when representatives of sixty national civic, educational, social and religious organizations functioning in this country met, at the invitation of Will H. Hays, in June of 1922, to discuss with him the problems of the motion picture industry and to devise ways and means for bringing about a better situation therein. The outcome of this gathering was the formation of the Committee on Public Relations, for "the establishment of a channel of intercommunication between

the agencies instrumental in forming and interpreting public opinion and the motion picture industry." This committee, coöperating with the organization known as the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc., is wielding the influence begotten of a combined membership of 60,000,000 people, scattered throughout the whole country, in behalf of

the increased use of motion pictures as a force for good citizenship and a factor in social benefit; for the development of more intelligent coöperation between the public and the motion picture industry; to aid the coöperative movement instituted between the National Education Association and the motion picture producers for the making of pedagogic films and employing them effectively in schools; to encourage the effort to advance the usefulness of motion pictures as an instrument of international amity by correctly portraying American life, ideals and opportunities in pictures sent abroad and by properly depicting foreigners and foreign scenes in pictures presented here; to further, in general, all constructive methods for bringing about a sympathetic interest in the attainment and maintenance of high standards of art, entertainment, education and morals in motion pictures.

Not the least important of the appendices to be found at the end of this book is that which gives a list of the national organizations composing this Committee on Public Relations. It is in effect a

record of a great mobilization of the uplifting agencies of the nation on the side of righteousness and progress in a struggle between good and evil for control of the newest and most powerful of the vehicles at man's disposal for influencing his fellow-man. As has been demonstrated in another chapter, the screen has become the most effective and wide-reaching of all the media yet devised by human ingenuity for influencing the heart, mind and soul of the race. Realizing this, the organizations referred to above (listed with approximate fullness in the appendix), representing more than half the entire population of the United States, have thrown the weight of their enormous influence upon the side of those builders of a better civilization who are striving to make the motion picture more worthy of the important place it has so recently assumed in the life of the world. Never before in the history of the race has such a unification of effort by the great altruistic organizations of a nation been made in times of peace, and for the purposes of peace, as that which was begun a year and a half ago by the Committee on Public Relations. What the screen could do to improve the social order was recognized at the very moment it was seen what the social order could do to improve the screen—and, lo, there came about an alliance that, to those who grasped its full signi-

ficance, stood revealed as one of the greatest forward steps civilization has ever taken. The organized powers of uplift and enlightenment had seen that a new, untried, undisciplined force, pregnant of both good and evil, had come into the world and they had rallied to its assistance at the psychological moment, to the end that the future of the screen, and therefore of the human race itself, might present a more satisfactory aspect than it has hitherto exhibited.

Says Mr. Jason S. Joy, Executive Secretary of the Committee on Public Relations:

I am often asked the following three progressive questions—First, why are the organizations affiliated with the Committee on Public Relations interested in the motion picture? Second, why are they working with the motion picture people rather than against them? Third, why do they coöperate with the so-called “old-line” companies rather than exclusively with independent companies?

I am able to answer these questions to my own satisfaction. Admitting that motion pictures exercise a powerful influence for good or evil, it is to the selfish interests of these organizations to make motion pictures an influence for good. As to the second query, let me say that constructive coöperation is capable of greater results than destructive criticism, particularly when it is accompanied by a willingness to privately but fearlessly condemn evil practices when they are found to exist. It seems to me wholly foolish and futile to cry out against any practice unless at the same time you are able to

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suggest a solution or at least an attempt at a solution of the problem. I am convinced that one of the most harmful habits of our day is the one which has been adopted by certain amateur and professional reformers who with half truths loudly condemn the motion picture industry and everybody connected with it. My answer to the third query is this: The Committee on Public Relations is working with the so-called old line companies because these companies have demonstrated their ability to make the kind of pictures the public has hitherto demanded and have, therefore, manifested their knowledge of the technique and business methods of making pictures; because, also, they have demonstrated and expressed their desire to attain the ends for which the Committee is working, and because they have asked the Committee to coöperate with them, and are coöperating with the Committee. Within parenthesis, let me say, that there pass by me at the cross-roads where I sit no end of Sir Galahads rushing forth to conquer the world. These persons are usually well-equipped with ideals and enthusiasm and often with money, but because they lack the technical ability which results from long experience they come back with little to show for their efforts except a trail of broken promises, unpaid debts, and lost ideals. Our best and only hope for the future lies with the well established companies who have proved their ability in their profession.

The human race moves forward and upward through the efforts of those who know how to perform the miracle of hitching their wagon to a star while, at the same time, they keep their feet upon the earth. Taking at random a few of the sixty organiza-

tions comprising the Committee on Public Relations we come upon such sharply contrasted bodies as the Society of Colonial Dames and the General Federation of Women's Clubs; the Academy of Political Science and the Salvation Army; the Girls Friendly Society and the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World; The National Council of Catholic Women and the Young Men's Hebrew Association; the American Federation of Labor and the Boy Scouts of America, etc. Now all these societies, fraternities, sororities, or whatsoever they may be, helping by their membership to make up the 60,000,000 Americans who have come officially to the support of the motion picture industry, have, each and every one of them, reached a position of power and success by wasting no time in endeavoring futilely to put salt on the tail of the millennium but by combining loyalty to high ideals with practical efficiency in dealing with this world as it manifests itself to the worker who dreams and the dreamer who works. In other words, our great altruistic organizations discovered at the outset of their respective careers that the ideal and the practical are necessary to each other but, to produce results, must plan how to make constant compromises with each other for the sake of actual progress.

The motion picture producers have gone through,

as an organization, the same experience that has come to the Colonial Dames, the Salvation Army, the Boy Scouts, or any one of the organizations holding membership on the Committee of Public Relations. They have learned by experiment that progress is made possible only through a working adjustment between idealism and realism. If idealism is allowed to become rainbow-chasing, or realism to become revolting, the balance that assures a steady movement in the right direction is destroyed and disaster results. Every earthly institution that survives has been forced to fight its way to permanency against the disintegrating influence of its own extremists, its ultra-conservatives and ultra-radicals. In the long run, it is the middle of the road that leads nations and institutions into safe environments.

The great question at issue in connection with the motion picture industry, as it is with any given line of human endeavor, is this: Is its course upward or downward, will its future be free from the shortcomings of its past? Let me say here, very frankly, that had I not felt months ago that an affirmative answer to these queries was not merely justified but had been made imperative by facts and figures this book would never have been written. But as the work has progressed, and I have been obliged to look at the motion picture field through both a telescope

and a microscope, I have been convinced by an overwhelming mass of evidence that the general trend of the newest of the arts is, in spite of all that I have said about its youthful indiscretions, in the right direction.

It can never attain perfection—nothing that is man-made can hope to do that. But the movie, whatever may be said against it by its detractors, is constantly making progress toward a commanding position where, it is conceivable, it may eventually confer upon mankind the inestimable boon of which the author, as stated in the first chapter of this book, has had the audacity to dream. And be it said just here that if the full dynamics of the screen as a world-civilizer are completely developed, eventually both producers and public will owe a great debt of gratitude to the Committee on Public Relations.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE MOVIE AS A PEDAGOGUE

*The Entertainer Becomes an Instructor—Schools and Colleges make the Screen a Professor—Visual Instruction more Effective than Text-Books—Educational Films as Teachers of History—The Screen an Ally to Historical Accuracy—Can it Save the Race from a Threatened Cataclysm ?*



## CHAPTER XII

### THE MOVIE AS A PEDAGOGUE

THE utilitarian evolution of the movie has been as remarkable as the recreational—though much less spectacular. The screen seems to have come like a poultice to heal the blows of ignorance, of worn-out methods in schools, hospitals and laboratories, and to act as a tonic upon all the movements and enterprises that make for the betterment of the race. Modern scientists, philanthropists, statesmen, educators, sociologists, uplifters of all kinds, may appropriately paraphrase Robert Burns by exclaiming “a screen’s amang ye takin’ notes.”

Visual education—that is, intellectual stimulus through motion pictures—has made amazing progress in our schools and colleges during the past few years. It has been proved by statistics, based upon the results of examinations, that students instructed by screen-pictures obtain higher marks than those who have been seeking knowledge on a given subject only through text-books.

Evidence upon this point has become of late cumulative and conclusive. Data to show that the Esperanto of the Eye is a more efficient instructor than either the spoken or the printed word is ours in abundance, but only one or two striking proofs of the proposition will suffice for our present purposes. Two years ago Professor Joseph J. Weber, of the University of Kansas, conducted a series of enlightening tests in Public School No. 62, New York City, with the following results:

Four hundred and eighty-five pupils in the school were examined as to their knowledge of geography. It was found that their average rating as a class was only 31.8. Oral teaching, without the aid of correlated motion picture films, raised this average presently to 45.5, a gain of 13.7. The films were then used after the oral lessons and an average of 49.9 was obtained, a gain of 18.1. By the employment of the films before instead of after the oral instructions the average percentage was increased to 52.7, a gain of 20.9.

At about the same time, Professor J. W. Sheppard, of the University of Oklahoma, made an experiment in visual education at a high-school in Madison, Wis. Abstract and concrete subjects were taught to a group of pupils of ordinary intelligence by means of the films only, to a second group by a superior in-

structor only, and to a third group by an average instructor only. In a searching examination subsequently the pupils taught by the films scored an average of 74.5, those taught by the superior instructor an average of 66.9, and those by the inferior instructor an average of 61.3. In this game of twenty questions the screen had won the pot by a safe margin.

The significance of the above is revealed in its entirety when we realize that even the movie as a purveyor of amusement has not wholly neglected its obligations as a pedagogue. The millions of Americans who daily watch the screen in quest of recreation are, willy nilly, obliged to absorb something in the way of added knowledge. Geography, history—both ancient and contemporary,—botany, astronomy, physics, ethnology, archæology and other educational sources are tapped, even in the least pretentious movie theatres, to stir the imaginations and enlarge the general knowledge of their patrons. It is safe to say that the American people, even though our schools and colleges had not welcomed the film as an aid to education, would have vastly increased their information regarding our planet and the history and achievements of the human race merely through the homage that the amusement screen has paid, perforce, to erudition.

But what the recreational screen has done casually and inadequately for the dissemination of general knowledge, is, of course, negligible compared with the influence that has been exerted by the educational films whose use in the class-rooms of our schools and colleges has been for some years past constantly on the increase. The growing importance of the film as an adjunct to instruction is shown by the fact that its progress has not been left to chance, as was the evolution of the recreational movie. The realm of visual education has been taken over by men and organizations whose qualifications for the task they have assumed assure to the screen in the class-room a great and splendid future. Concerning this matter, Will H. Hays recently said:

The Society of Visual Education contains thirteen presidents of colleges, six of normal schools, three representatives of large foundations, seventy-six professors and instructors in colleges and universities, nine state superintendents of public instruction and seventy-one city superintendents of schools. There are other groups of educators in the motion picture field—notably the National Academy of Visual Instruction and the Visual Instruction Association of America. An incomplete list shows twenty-eight colleges and universities which have organized departments for the distribution of films. At least seventeen of our largest educational institutions are giving courses to their students on the use of the motion picture for visual instruction. Columbia has

courses which teach photoplay writing and the mechanics of production. The University of Nebraska has erected a film studio on its campus, and the Universities of Yale, Chicago, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, Illinois and Utah have started the production of their own motion pictures.

Let us confine ourselves for the moment to what the educational films are doing in the realm of history, leaving their achievements as pictorial aids to the study of astronomy, physics, ethnology, palæontology, geology, and other sciences, for later consideration. If the Esperanto of the Eye is to be instrumental in giving to this and coming generations an accurate picture of our race's past, it is essential that our films dealing with history should be accurate in detail. A falsehood exploited by the screen can do more damage than a misrepresentation imbedded in a text-book. It is encouraging, therefore, to those of us who believe that educational films are destined eventually to exercise an influence for good upon mankind that may save it from a return to barbarism to realize that the screen as an adjunct to the teaching of history is receiving valuable assistance from our most eminent professors in this field of study.

There is much data at our disposal to prove that the Olympian heights of erudition are deeply impressed by the obligations which the enlightened gods owe to films fashioned to instruct lesser and more

ignorant mortals. It will suffice for our present purpose, however, to prove the existence of a general and praiseworthy trend in visual instruction by giving, in some detail, an account of an enterprise, sponsored by the Department of History of Yale University, that is of importance in itself, but, more than that, significant in the promise it gives of a splendid future for the educational film.

In a despatch from Chicago, Ill., under date of Tuesday, August 1, 1922, a correspondent of the New York *Evening Post* says:

History was rewritten here to-day, shorn of its romance and amplified by facts, by the Yale University Press. To do this, mediæval sailors, dressed in gayly colored tights and jerkins, with huge knives in their belts, clambered through the rigging of the Santa Maria off Jackson Park, and Christopher Columbus leaned over the rail, crucifix in hand, and gazed at the receding shores, while two camera men kept grinding away at their machines. All this was done that the popular idea of history might be revised and the school children of America might have accurate information, uncontaminated by the legends and myths which have grown around the discovery of America during the last 400 years. . . . The Yale University Press is making a series of historical pictures for school use which the History Department of the University asserts will be as accurate as research and study can make them. On board the Santa Maria there were mutinies and troublesome times. Martin Alonzo Pinzon, a Spanish gentleman who owned the



Santa Maria, commanded the Pinta, and furnished the cash for the expedition. Much more is made of Pinzon in the film than of Queen Isabella, the Professors of History at Yale being inclined to doubt the legend that Her Majesty ever patronized a pawn-shop to give assistance to the dare-deviltry of Columbus.

What visual instruction in history is to become presently is a fascinating subject in dwelling upon which the imaginative optimist, reading the signs of the times, can not but take keen delight. The past is to be to the student no longer a graveyard, in which he rambles confusedly, reading ridiculous epitaphs upon monuments whose comparative impressiveness is misleading, but a series of dramatic performances, appealing to the senses, the mind and the soul, in which the *dramatis personæ* will present history as a serial-play in which the latest act is one in which he himself is taking a minor part.

Never before, in the history of the race, has mankind taken so deep and wide-spread an interest in the past of mankind as it exhibits to-day. There appears to be a world-wide feeling that, unless the race can learn the lessons that the great catastrophes that have repeatedly overtaken civilization teach, the outlook for the future is appallingly dark. On New Year's Day, 1923, a body of prominent American educators issued an appeal to the public in which the following striking sentences occur:

The present situation in international affairs, involving as it does the imminent peril of war, must give concern to every thoughtful observer. After a devastating conflict which has cost millions of lives, created immeasurable hatred and piled up a debt of \$50 for every minute of time since Christ was born, the nations of the earth, apparently having learned nothing and forgotten nothing, are once more playing the old game of competitive imperialism and competitive armament.

The above, startling but unanswerable as it is, has a direct bearing upon the subject we have just had under discussion, namely, the teaching of history through visual instruction. The advantages of this method for schools and colleges, conclusively proven though it has been, will be of no permanent and uplifting value to coming generations unless the screen as a pedagogue finds a way to give to a race that is constantly repeating old and fatal errors a message and a warning that shall influence the young men and women who are to mould the world's future to avoid the disastrous errors of their progenitors. From this point of view it becomes apparent that to those into whose hands has been placed the dissemination of educational films has been vouchsafed a great opportunity to benefit a race that is in sore need of guidance, of some impetus that shall make its future less deplorable than its blood-stained past.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE MOVIE INTERPRETING THE PAST

*Philip Kerr vs. H. G. Wells—Is the Race Doomed to Commit Hari-Kari?—The Failures of Diplomacy—The Screen Revealing Man to Himself—History the Best Bet of a Warworn Race—Teaching the Young Idea How Not to Shoot—Peace Via the Film.*



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE MOVIE INTERPRETING THE PAST

WHETHER the first antidote the race has discovered against polyglot poison can save civilization before it is blown to pieces by high explosive shells is a problem that assumes new significance daily, as diplomacy continues to commit, in its blind and fatuous egotism, its historic blunders. The headlines in the newspapers furnish a sad commentary upon the present status of the collective wisdom of mankind. The average intelligence of the race as it is manifested in international affairs is below the standard set by a day-nursery, where a singing child, it is confidently assumed, will avoid the fire. The high cost of war in life and treasure has been demonstrated to the race in recent years by a world-wide conflict that threatened the very foundations of civilization with destruction. Did mankind learn the lesson taught by this titanic struggle? If it did not, if it continues to provide itself with new and deadlier weapons for the waging of unimaginably awful combats, what can be done at the last moment,

as this may prove to be, to save civilization from ruin as it totters upon the very edge of a fatal precipice?

The tragic importance of this query may seem, at first sight, to throw into comparative insignificance the topic we have under discussion, namely, the teaching of history in our schools and colleges through visual instruction. But our pointed question and our general theme are, as will presently appear, closely related to one another.

Philip Kerr, for five years confidential adviser and secretary to Lloyd George, is among those who hold that we who indulge the hope that the screen may eventually act as a poultice to heal the blows delivered by diplomacy against the peace of the world are but chasing another rainbow that has at its end not a pot of ointment but a gigantic pile of dynamite. At Williamstown, Mass., last summer, Mr. Kerr said, to an audience of scholars and statesmen of international prominence:

If we look back through history we shall see that what has happened in the last eight years is not a unique nor isolated phenomenon. For example, there was a world war for the first fifteen years of the last century, ending with the battle of Waterloo. We can trace back through the ages an ever-recurring procession of devastating wars engulfing the whole of the civilized world, followed by peaces of exhaustion, which in turn gave way to new eras of war. The question I have been asking myself for the

last two or three years has been this: Have we as the result of the terrible experiences of the late war, and of the victory of the Allies, any real security against a repetition of a world war. To this question I have to answer, No.

To this deplorable and hopeless conclusion Mr. Kerr comes because he finds that mankind does its thinking not in terms of humanity, but of states; that the world, in so far as international problems are concerned, is as parochial as it was a generation or a century ago. "Life," remarked a flippant pessimist, "is just one damned thing after another." To Mr. Kerr's despondent eyes history seems to be just one devastating war after another, with no end to the infernal succession now in sight. But is it not barely possible that history, gaining from the screen a new method of exposition, a new way of approach to the soul of Man, may eventually convince the human race that there is a more sensible solution to international problems than through bloodshed?

It is through the study of history alone that Man can, in the opinion of H. G. Wells, find his way toward higher planes of existence out of the mire in which he is now stuck. In his book "The Undying Fire," Wells, speaking through the hero of his story, says, in explanation of his plan for the improvement of society:

I want this world better taught, so that wherever the flame of God can be lit it may be lit. Let us suppose everyone to be educated. By educated, to be explicit, I mean possessing a knowledge and understanding of history. Salvation can be attained by history. Suppose that instead of a myriad of tongues and dialects all men could read the same books and talk together in the same speech—think what a difference there would be in such a world from the conditions prevailing to-day. . . . This is a world where folly and hate can bawl sanity out of hearing. Only the determination of schoolmasters and teachers offers hope for a change in all this.

Philip Kerr and H. G. Wells examining, as they do, the same historical data, shocked, as they both are, by mankind's constant repetition of ancient and easily avoidable errors, reach, from the same premises, diametrically opposite conclusions. Kerr denies that our race can obtain from a study of its past any hope for its future. Wells, on the other hand, holds that history can be made the handmaiden of progress and that those who teach it can become, if they are worthy of their sacred mission, the saviors of an imperilled race.

At the present moment, of course, it is impossible to determine whether the pessimism of Kerr or the optimism of Wells is entitled to the verdict of the court. The evidence is not all in, and, from present appearances, the case seems destined to a long and tedious life, going down on appeal, as it must, from



one generation to another. But would it not be a hopelessly mad world which, on the issue involved in this contention, backed Kerr against Wells? Imagine the race abandoning itself to despair, admitting that it can find within itself no safeguard against its impending doom of hari-kari, turning heart-sick and hopeless from futile peace-conferences and gazing in sullen silence at the mobilization of new armies under old catch-words in various parts of a blood-soaked planet! Even if Wells shall prove to be in the end a dreamer of dreams and chaser of rainbows, defeated in his effort to put salt on the tail of the millennium, is it not more reasonable to take a gambling chance on his possible victory as an idealist than to give abject surrender with Kerr to the evil influences that for countless ages have made of our planet a recurrent shambles?

Common-sense, then, forces us to the conclusion that, in the perturbed world in which we at present find ourselves there is no feature of our complicated modern life more entitled to earnest consideration than the screen as historian. In schools, colleges and movie theatres, with films depicting significant episodes in Man's past or illuminating events of to-day, a mirror is vouchsafed to this generation in which it can see both itself and its progenitors in a light that now for the first time clarifies our sight. The regen-

eration of the individual through religious influences is effected in large part by means of a self-revelation that begets repentance and reform. To employ a bit of slang to illustrate the point, all sinners come from Missouri and refuse to be rescued blindly. They must be shown. The wicked, war-soiled, wantonly selfish nations of the world have never had, so far as the masses of the people are concerned, the truths of history visualized to their startled eyes. Is it not possible that when the errors, the tragedies, the cumulative horrors of the past are revealed to them, when the majority of men and women turn to the evidence of their senses rather than to gossip, rumor and hearsay for historical enlightenment, Mankind, horrified at his scowling face and bloody hands, as he sees them for the first time in a mirror, will take an oath to remove the brand of Cain from his brow, the blush from his cheeks as the screen shows him what man's inhumanity to man really means?

The late Viscount Bryce, just before his regrettable death, delivered eight lectures in the United States on "the large subject covered by the term International Relations." "It is History," says Bryce, "which, recording the events and explaining the influences that have moulded the minds of men, shows us how the world of international politics has come to be what it is. History is the best—indeed the

only—guide to a comprehension of the facts as they stand, and to a sound judgment of the various means that have been suggested for replacing suspicions and enmities by the co-operation of States in many things and by their good will in all.” But Bryce, than whom no publicist of our times has held higher place as a seer and prophet, speaks not in an optimistic vein in his last published utterances.

The great lesson of the war, that the ambitions and hatreds which cause war must be removed, has not been learned, and if this war has failed to impress the lesson upon most of the peoples, what else can teach them? This is why thoughtful men are despondent, and why some comfort must now be sought for, some remedy devised at once against a recurrence of the calamities we have suffered.

Bryce is in agreement with the leading minds of to-day striving for a solution of international problems. They see no way out of the difficulties and perils confronting the race unless some new and hitherto unknown method be found to prevent mankind from repeating the scarlet sins that have disgraced and incarnadined the past. Arbitration, conciliation, alliances, treaties, congresses, leagues, peace palaces and palaver—what have they accomplished that can be cited to confute the pessimism of Philip Kerr or to suggest the remedy the necessity for which

James Bryce, with the clairvoyance of a dying man, acutely realized? What the race needs at this critical hour is both a message and a medium, a warning and a way, a revelation and a road, with a light from the past shining on the pathway just ahead.

And Man has at his command this way, this medium, this road, upon which gleams a radiance that might easily save the race from destruction, if he had sufficient sense to learn from his past just a few elementary lessons in common-sense, just a few basic truths that, once grasped, would change history from a record of recurrent crimes to an epic tale of Man's triumph over himself.

History as told by the screen in the class-room—is it not possible that the destiny of mankind is thus to be decided? The plastic minds of the young intrigued by the story of Man's rise from protoplasm to poet, from amœba to aeronaut, from cave-man to lord of creation may be so impressed, within the next few generations, by the tragic absurdity of civilized man's periodical reversions to savagery that some divine day the enlightened youth of the world will go out on a universal strike against old idiocies and cruelties, and to the screen that taught history will be given the glory of bringing mankind at one bound within striking distance of the millennium.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MOVIE TAKES ON NEW FUNCTIONS

*Solves Many Problems—Becomes Actor, Artist, Singer, Scientist, Teacher, Drummer—As a Hamlet Shows Mother Earth Two Pictures—Will the Race Go Up or Go Down—The Screen Possibly a Savior.*



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MOVIE TAKES ON NEW FUNCTIONS

HAS a race harassed, well-nigh hopeless, forever committing old errors under new incitements, found in the screen both a pedagogue and a peacemaker, potent for rescue if its possibilities are grasped in time? The query may seem fantastic, the hope it suggests quixotic, the promise at which it hints premature. But the question is, perhaps, the most important before the world to-day and upon its answer may depend the future of the race.

In an address before the National Civic Federation at Washington, D. C., on January 17, 1923, Elihu Root said:

The manifest purpose of the great body of voters in democratic countries to control directly the agents who are carrying on the foreign affairs of their countries involves a terrible danger as well as a great step in human progress—a great step in progress if the democracy is informed, a terrible danger if the democracy is ignorant. An ignorant democracy controlling foreign affairs leads directly to war and the destruction of

civilization. An informed democracy insures peace and the progress of civilization.

At this crisis in the career of humanity there is but one medium by which the democracies of the world can be given the information necessary, in the opinion of Mr. Root, to avert the cataclysm threatening humanity, and that is the motion picture screen. That this medium is becoming, by leaps and bounds, better equipped for its gigantic task of world-salvation is apparent to even the most careless observer. During the short time that has elapsed since the author wrote the first sentence of this little book, the movie has enlarged its scope, possibilities and actual achievements in a startling and bewildering way. To illustrate this point, which is of crucial significance in connection with the topic now under discussion, let me quote a few head-lines culled at random from the metropolitan press of recent date.

“Revolutionary Talking Movies—Widespread Changes Predicted if New Invention is a Success.” “‘Color Film Great,’ says C. D. Gibson. Artist at Private Exhibition Finds Effects Wonderfully Reproduced.” “Ditmar’s Film Gives Life to the Prehistoric. Zoo Curator Presents Real Live Monsters.” “Talking Movie Hailed in Berlin by Scientists as Great Success.” “New Method Gives Perfect Color to Motion Pictures. First Film a Riot of Color but Not at Expense of Reality.” “Stereoscopic Film Indicating Depth Shown Here.” “Scientist Brings



Talking Film. Prof. de Forest Here with Device Whereby Even Operas May Be Produced on Screen." "Modern Wizards Bewilder Edison. Watches Voice Filmed." "Einstein's Relativity Theory in Pictures. Fascinating, Ingenious and Revolutionary."

The above list might be greatly prolonged, but it serves the purpose we have in hand as it stands. It means that the possibilities of the screen are being realized at an amazing rate of progress, that the Esperanto of the Eye, which found its alphabet when Edison invented the kinetoscope, has now become a universal method of expression fitted to reveal eventually all human knowledge to the race in such a manner that it can be sensed, if not comprehended, by even illiterates and morons. There are, of course, technical problems connected with color, depth and the synchronization of voice and movement which it may be impossible for the ingenuity of man to solve, but the year 1923 will appeal to the future historian of the movie as a period in which the screen entered a domain possessing hitherto undreamed of facilities for intensifying the potency of the playwright, actor, scientist, educator, statesman, philanthropist and salesman.

The last-mentioned beneficiary of the screen, commonly called "drummer," is worthy of a moment's attention just here as helping to prove our general

proposition that there is no field of human activity that has not been, or that will not be, influenced and perhaps greatly changed by the growing vogue of the movie. A recently-published editorial in the New York *Herald* says:

The power of the screen to divert trade from one country to another is a subject that has been hitherto little discussed. An article in *Commerce Reports*, the weekly survey of foreign trade issued by the United States Department of Commerce, however, declares that the motion pictures displayed in foreign countries influence the consuming public in the choice of markets. In fact, so great has been the influence of the motion picture in diverting commerce to the United States that foreign newspapers have already cautioned their film producers not to ignore the opportunities for commercial expansion that are inherent in the drama shown on the screen.

As Terence remarked long ago, so might the movie remark to-day: "Nothing that is of interest to mankind is outside of my sphere of endeavor." In an address delivered last year at the University of Pennsylvania, Sir Auckland Geddes, British Ambassador to the United States, said:

It is hard to find ground upon which our civilization can certainly and safely stand in the future. As one looks around the world to-day and sees in country after country the power, the direction of force, passing from the hands of the people who have long held that power,

sees wealth being destroyed, sees all the surplus margin of wealth disappear, one realizes—not immediately but looking forward into the future—that we have cause to take steps to spread the appreciation of research, so that no shift of political power can possibly take place that will not keep it in the hands of those who understand the importance of research.

Research! From generation to generation, mankind has been engaged in making investigations and discoveries that have constantly enriched and enlarged the treasure-house of human knowledge. But research, by which, as the British Ambassador asserts, civilization may save itself from destruction, has been hitherto an affair of specialists, not of the multitude, an activity carried on in laboratories or in desert solitudes or on lonely mountain-tops, and its results have been made manifest only to the erudite few. But, lo, through the screen the movie-theatre becomes at one moment a laboratory, at another a desert solitude, at another a lonely mountain-top. Audiences of millions become experimenters in all realms of research, temporary astronomers, physicists, chemists, travellers, hunters, entomologists, ornithologists, archæologists—what you will. Erudition is fed to the masses in small quantities, and the more they eat of it the more they crave. “Know thyself!” cried the old Greek Philosopher to the individual man. “Know thyself!” exclaims the screen to the

race at large, and proceeds to show to mankind the way to that universal selfknowledge that, if it comes to man in time, may protect his future from the blunders, crimes and tragedies that have disgraced his past.

The screen may well be represented to our mind's eye as a modern Hamlet who says to a blood-stained Mother Earth:

Look here upon this picture—and upon this! I show you to yourself as you have been—and to yourself as you may be. Look here at the horrors and devastation, the cruelties and crimes of yesterday and to-day. Then turn your eyes upon the world of to-morrow as I shall reveal it to you in its splendid possibilities—a new world, peaceful, industrious, contented, going forward from one great triumph in progressive civilization to another, differing from the earth that was and is as light from darkness, as day from night! I show you the way, I reveal to you the decision that you must make. If yours be the baser choice, if you continue to repeat, generation after generation, the old blunders, the old crimes, I shall not be to blame. I, the screen, show you two roads, the one leading upward, the other downward. You may, by seeing your racial soul in the mirror I hold up to you, go to Heaven or to Hades. Your journey's end depends not upon me but upon you.

What does Man crave—what has he always craved? Freedom. Freedom from what? From avoidable ills—preventable diseases, unnecessary poverty, unjustifiable wars, preventable accidents,

every ill, in short, that not only darkens his life but offends his intelligence.

The history of mankind [says Louis Berman, M. D.] is a long research into the nature of the machinery of freedom. All recorded history, indeed, is but the documentation of that research. Viewed thus, customs, laws, institutions, sciences, arts, codes of morality and honor, systems of life, become inventions, come upon, tried out, standardized, established until scrapped in everlasting search for more and more perfect means of freeing body and soul from their congenital thralldom to a host of innumerable masters. Indeed, the history of all life, vegetable and animal, of bacillus, elephant, orchid, gorilla, as well as of man is the history of a searching for freedom.

At last, through his own astounding but too-often misdirected ingenuity, Man has found that which alone could remove from his limbs the shackles that have held him captive throughout the centuries. He has discovered a universal language that may conceivably bring about the brotherhood of the race and the reduction to a minimum of the ills that flesh is heir to. But with the coming of the Esperanto of the Eye the salvation of the race is not assured. While the screen may minimize eventually the evils that spring from a world-wide confusion of tongues, it can permanently eradicate those evils only by the dissemination of a message that shall exert an uplifting influence upon the perturbed soul of humanity.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE MOVIE AS A WORLD POWER

*Its Enormous Audiences—It Speaks to all Men—What Message Does it Carry?—The Race at the Parting of the Ways—Have International Marplots Won Control of the Screen?—The Fate of Civilization in the Balance.*





## CHAPTER XV

### THE MOVIE AS A WORLD POWER

IN a very important particular the title first chosen for this little book was a misnomer, a fact that grows more apparent to the author as he approaches the end of the task he has essayed. "A Biography of the Movie," the name I had selected for my projected volume, implies, at this period of the evolution of the picture screen, either too much or too little—too much if it suggests a comprehensive history of a life that has but recently begun, too little if it fails to show that the facts and figures available regarding the development of the motion picture demonstrate the dynamics of the screen as a medium for racial intercommunication. There came, of course, to the writer the temptation to dwell in detail upon the romantic story of the rise of the movie from insignificance to world-dominion, from poverty to affluence, from a plaything to a power, to mention names made famous by the screen, to maintain, in short, the same attitude of mind toward the cinema and all its

works that impelled Merton of the Movies to idealize the new art and industry whether he looked at them through a telescope or a microscope. That a work based upon the more personal aspects of the movie's evolution can be both readable and timely has been proved of late by the success achieved in book form by the personal reminiscences of one of the leading producers in the motion picture realm. But had I succumbed to the inclination to give what may be called the lure that lies in gossip to this little volume, I should have taken merely the path of least resistance and have left wholly undone the real task I have essayed, namely, that of getting an idea, a prophecy, a promise, a possibility—whatsoever you may be pleased to call it—into the minds of my readers, to the end that the project referred to in the first chapter of this book may receive eventually the consideration to which I, with all due modesty, believe it is entitled.

In other words, I have been endeavoring to explain briefly how the toy kinetoscope of a quarter of a century ago by becoming a universal medium of expression has made what men and nations say to each other in this new world-language of crucial significance to the future of civilization.

Now just here we come face to face with the most significant, the most tragically important, feature of

the tremendous subject with which we are dealing. Is Man, triumphant at last over the evils that befell him at the Tower of Babel, possessing for the first time in his racial career a universal language, actually in possession of soul-stirring truths that, reaching the race at large, shall overcome the powers of darkness menacing our modern civilization? Let me repeat the concluding sentence of the preceding chapter: "While the screen may minimize eventually the evils springing from a world-wide confusion of tongues, it can permanently eradicate those evils only by the dissemination of a message that shall exert an uplifting influence upon the perturbed soul of humanity."

Shall Christ or Cæsar, idealism or materialism, altruism or animosities, progress or reaction dominate the screen? The importance of the answer that the future makes to this query can not be conceivably over-estimated. To repeat an assertion I made in a preceding chapter, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are struggling for domination over the soul of the screen and the issue of the conflict is still in abeyance.

A timely truth finding lodgment in the perturbed souls of men might conceivably save the race from destruction. By means of a modern invention an idea, opportunely dropped from the clouds by heroic airmen behind the German lines, destroyed the

morale of the cohorts of reaction and brought victory to the Allied arms. Two things were here essential to success—the message itself and the medium for its dissemination. Of the two, the message is, of course, infinitely the more important. But Wilson's words, at that special crisis, would have been futile had they not been given wings by Wright.

Civilization stands in sore need of a message of a unifying and peace-begetting nature. The screen offers it a medium whereby such a message could be carried to the ends of the earth, to be known of all mankind through the Esperanto of the Eye. But whence shall this message come? By what authority, by what sanction, shall it force itself upon the minds and hearts and souls of all men? If the screen falls eventually wholly into the control of demagogues, a medium for enlightenment that might save the race from the threatening evils of the future will not merely fail to fulfill its highest mission but will become the most powerful weapon of those who would undermine and presently destroy existing civilization.

As an uplifting, educational, civilizing force, the movie appears to be approaching the parting of the ways. As has been shown in preceding chapters, it has vastly enlarged its scope and possibilities as an influence, direct or indirect, upon the daily lives of

millions of human beings. It has of late solved the major mechanical problems that confronted it. At its present rate of progress, the cinema will soon become more powerful as an influence upon the minds of the masses than are the newspaper, the novel and the play taken together.

For the sun never sets upon the screen! Day and night, in all parts of the civilized, and an increasing portion of the uncivilized, globe the motion picture is making its imprint upon the minds and souls of countless millions of men, women and children. It has taken possession of a polyglot world and is speaking daily to the human race in a tongue that is understood as readily on the Congo as at Cambridge. But what is it saying? "Ah, there's the rub!" Is the screen merely a mirror in which Man looks upon his own face and turns away heedless of what his countenance might have taught him? Has the race finally found a way to that self-knowledge which might mean its eventual salvation only to misuse, as its wont has been, its newest medium for advancement? Can nothing be learned from the screen by the restless, harassed, apprehensive millions of the earth that shall make this first universal method of communication worthy of the possibilities for world-wide uplift that it possesses?

The answer to these queries depends largely upon

your personal point of view, upon the philosophy of life which dominates your mental processes. If you are influenced by that widely-accepted generalization to the effect that "human nature never changes" you will not be inclined to take seriously our contention that by forcing Man to observe and study, by means of the screen, the blunders, idiocies, crimes and tragedies of his past he may be forced eventually to repent and reform, to make of his future something less reprehensible than his past has been. But human nature is not fixed—it is fluid. It has changed, and it is always in the process of changing. In fact, the time may not be far distant when not only the individual but the race at large, hitherto at the mercy of endocrinal glands, will find in the laboratory methods whereby thyroids and pituitaries and adrenals and the other chemical arbiters of the fate of men and nations may be so dominated by science that human nature will not merely change with heartbreaking slowness for the better but will spring at a bound into its supermanhood.

The above fantastic possibility is not, at this stage of the new biology, to be taken very seriously, but the suggestion thrown out serves, at least, to call attention to the fact that never before in the history of the race has Man been more concerned in his destiny than he is to-day, more inclined to turn away

from old methods of solving the riddle of his being, methods that have long played him false, and to turn hopefully to new teachers, new sciences, new hopes, new horizons. And, lo, at this great moment, when, as never before, Man craves all knowledge that he may know himself, chance—if such there be—has vouchsafed to him the one thing needful for a racial self-revelation, namely, a universal language.

As I wrote the above, this morning's newspapers were making the following announcement to their readers:

Plans for carrying on the work toward international peace by the Carnegie Endowment in Europe, Inc., became known yesterday when Justice Guy of the New York Supreme Court approved an application for the incorporation of that organization. Among the objects to be attained by the corporation are: To advance the cause of peace among nations, to hasten the abolition of international war, and to encourage and promote peaceful settlement of international differences. In particular to promote a thorough and scientific investigation and study of the causes of war and of the practical methods to prevent and avoid it. To diffuse information and to educate public opinion regarding the causes, nature and effect of war, and means for its prevention and avoidance. To cultivate friendly feelings between the inhabitants of the different countries and to increase the knowledge and understanding of each other by the several nations, etc.

Praiseworthy lofty and noble as the projects outlined above may be, it is no disparagement of their

promoters to assert that there is nothing startlingly new in the design they have at heart. In all generations there have been altruists who envisaged a world freed from war, but always has it happened that they have been aroused from dreams by the thunder of the guns. From one point of view at least, the saddest of countless sad sights in Europe after August 2, 1914, was the Peace Palace at the Hague.

But if there is nothing especially novel in what we may call the Carnegie creed as above worded, there is this to be said for the peace promoters of to-day that they have one great advantage over all their predecessors, even over those of ten years ago. A new medium for preventing Man from repeating his former errors and crimes is, by leaps and bounds, reaching a marvellous state of development. There is every reason to believe that the message above referred to, which a blood-stained race sorely needs, is that which the Carnegie Foundation is desirous of bringing to the minds and souls of men. But have the powers of evil and unrest, the promoters of international jealousies and hatreds, selfish demagogues craving always more power that they may make the worse appear the better reason, out-generated the forces of righteousness and placed the screen in bondage to their pernicious designs? If



they have, and the Esperanto of the Eye is to speak for Mr. Hyde instead of Dr. Jekyll, then has another great calamity befallen a race that had no need of more.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MOVIE AND THE CENSOR

*The Movie Ran Wild for Years—Not Threatened with Censorship Until too Old to Need it—What Christ Thought of Pharisees—History and Common-Sense Against Censorship—Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis Denounces it—Tories vs. Freeman, Yesterday and To-Day—American Constitution Doomed if Censorship Prevails.*



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MOVIE AND THE CENSOR

WE Americans are forever boasting of our sense of humor, but we have a deplorable way of exhibiting a complete lack thereof at certain crises when its saving grace alone could rescue us from ludicrous inconsistency. When in the early life of the movie it most needed supervision and restraint it was allowed to run wild at its own free will, and at once became a naughty, mischievous boy, covered with mud. As it grew in years and achievement, developing gradually new and higher ideals, its need for parental discipline automatically decreased, and it exhibited internally those guiding, corrective powers that have made it constantly more worthy of the sympathy and support of the best element in our civilization. And then came to pass a manifestation of belated Pharisaism upon the part of certain narrow-minded influences in our community that would have been laughable had it not been fraught with serious consequences to a novel art-form strug-

gling to find its appointed place in the life of the world. Where was America's boasted sense of humor when the demand for movie censorship waxed loud—for minorities always make a great noise—long after any reasonable excuse for such a censorship, if such excuse there could be, had forever passed away? What would be said of a father who had allowed his son to indulge in every kind of youthful indiscretion until the latter had almost reached his majority and then, when the boy had shown signs of repentance, reform, regeneration, confined him forcibly to his room and fed him physically upon bread and water and mentally upon the old Blue Laws of Connecticut? Neither the heart nor the brain of such a father would appear to us as sound.

In the eleventh chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke, Christ is quoted in ringing, uncompromising denunciation of that reactionary, tyrannical exercise of usurped authority which, through varied methods and media, has checked the progress of the human spirit toward enlightened freedom throughout all the centuries:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

And again he cries:

Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. . . . Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

“Ye have taken away the key of knowledge!” The crime of crimes, the unforgiveable sin! In this indictment that He brings against professional hair-splitters and obstructionists, selfishly standing in the way of human progress, the Christ gives divine sanction to Man’s efforts to satisfy the irresistible craving in his soul for light, ever more light, in the darkness through which he gropes. The fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is not, as in the old Eden legend, accursed, but is proclaimed by the Savior as food essential to that spiritual growth without which there could be no hope for our race.

The late Andrew D. White, in his great book dealing with the obstacles against which Science has had to struggle in its effort to enlarge the diameter of Man’s knowledge, paints a vivid picture of the tragic effects wrought by various forms of censorship upon the pathetic, heroic, Christ-sanctioned efforts of the human race to employ freely the key of knowledge to the end that we may always use “our dead selves as stepping-stones to higher things.” Prison, the

stake, massacre, war—what weapon has not been used by the foes of enlightenment that they might check mankind in its rise toward heights upon which the ancient, unhallowed prerogatives of a few reactionaries could not survive? And always, in some form or other, censorship has been the most serviceable weapon, both in times of war and times of peace, by which relentless unprogressives could break the spirit of those who strove to loosen the shackles of ignorance from the human spirit. The marvel is not that Man knows so much to-day as the fact that he has won what he knows against almost insuperable odds.

There came to New York from somewhere in the West a year or so ago a loquacious fanatic who loudly asserted that the earth is flat. The metropolis refused to take this peripatetic crank seriously, gave him a passing glance and laugh, and went on its busy way, momentarily astonished, perhaps, at the amazing stubbornness displayed by outworn errors in refusing to remain dead and buried. It is seldom, of course, that the call of the past, the urge to ignorance and reaction, is so blatantly and audaciously sounded, but Dowie of Zion City differed only in degree and not in kind from those frequently well-intentioned but always misguided busybodies who believe that the screen can be kept decent not by public opinion and commercial common-sense, but only by groups



of three, or five, or seven individuals wielding the arbitrary power of censorship.

The advocacy of official censorship of the movies is based upon a fallacy. Where the misguided men and women urging censorship make their chief error is in their attitude toward the rank and file of motion picture patrons. They base their demand for censorship upon the sweeping generalization that the majority of the millions of Americans who daily attend the movies crave salacious pictures and must be forcibly prevented from getting what they crave. This shows not merely ignorance of the psychology of the American people, but is an exhibition of indifference to the teachings of our national history that would be ridiculous if it were not so pernicious in its practical results. Furthermore, it is in essence the astounding proposition that there are millions of our countrymen who flock daily to the support of an institution that is openly undermining our most cherished ideals, brazenly attacking the home and poisoning the minds of our youth by the inculcation of ideas subversive of our existing civilization. Can not the fanatics who are demanding censorship realize that if the motion picture producers did not understand the American people, and our inherent and inherited inclination for cleanliness and decency, better than do the censor advocates the movie industry would have

gone to financial smash long ago? Furthermore, if the American public is not to be trusted to choose its own amusements, and to automatically censor them at the box-office or the park gate, is it competent to make its own laws, elect its own executives, in short, to carry the American experiment in government by the people to the splendid success that awaits it? This query is searching and fundamental. Advocacy of censorship in any form for the people of this country is a manifestation of un-Americanism that is as surely foredoomed to failure as was George III's attempt to enforce a tax upon our ancestor's tea. In truth, censorship, both fundamentally and historically, springs from power usurped and not from an altruistic regard for the moral welfare of a community. Its beneficiaries centuries ago learned how to camouflage their love of tyranny behind an assumed regard for the welfare of the public. But the people of the United States, as becomes daily more apparent, are too well informed, too sensitive to the unceasing efforts of old tyrannies to gain new victories, too jealous of the heritage of freedom that was won for them on hard-fought battlefields, to surrender their priceless liberty of thought and speech and educational and recreational choice to an outworn and discredited form of supervision.

The significance of a recent election held in one of

our historic cradles of liberty, the State that can boast of Concord, Lexington and Bunker Hill, in connection with the subject under discussion can hardly be overestimated. In 1921 the legislature of Massachusetts was induced to pass a censorship law. By petition it became a matter for referendum, and on November 7, 1922, the electorate of the Bay State voted upon the question whether or not they desired a censorship of the motion picture. The people defeated the measure by a vote of 553,173 to 208,252, a majority of 344,921 against censorship. Again had Massachusetts given an outward and visible sign of her inward and spiritual detestation of Toryism not essentially different in kind from that which she displayed when "a snuffy old drone from a German hive" was endeavoring, by force of arms, to hold her in leading-strings. What intrigues, if it does not startle and perplex, a thoughtful historian in connection with the above is that to-day in this country there is a clash, affecting the lives of every one of us, between the ideals which a century and a half ago placed George of England and George of Virginia in opposite and warring camps upon certain basic propositions connected with the subject of human liberty. But it is inconceivable, of course, that the spirit of George the Thirdism can have anything but a temporary influence in the United States

in the twentieth century, despite the noise now made by short-sighted, misguided or actually unprincipled champions of movie censorship—a censorship that, were there nothing else to urge against it, is an unnecessary and expensive luxury in light of the fact that the States and cities of our nation are adequately provided with laws and ordinances protecting the amusement-seeking public from indecent and immoral exhibitions.

The Rev. Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., one of the ablest, most eloquent, scholarly and influential divines in this country, referring in a recent sermon to matters touched upon in this chapter, said:

The descendants of the Puritans and the Dutchmen, whose fathers rebelled against the censors of the James I era, dictating to them what creed and government they must accept, find it hard, after three hundred years of freedom of press and speech, to go back to the very thing from which their ancestors fled. Long ago the historians said that the American Republic was the vision of John Milton in his plea for the liberty of the printing press, set up in code and constitution. The genius of our Republic is personal responsibility, individual excellence. A father and mother must rise up early and sit up late to teach their boy and girl to think for themselves, using their intellect; to weigh for themselves, using their judgment; to decide for themselves, using their own conscience and will.

"Hell is paved with good intentions." The tragedy that we call human history is made more understandable by these depressing, revelatory words. The fussy, the futile, those whose hearts are kindly but whose brains are weak, whose motives are praiseworthy but whose methods are inept and inadequate, have, from the beginning of time, made life harder than it need be for their fellow-men. When these well-intentioned but badly-balanced busybodies combine with stronger characters whose motives are reprehensibly selfish to mould men in the mass to their own narrow pattern, denying to the individual that freedom of choice regarding his own affairs that is one of the essential bulwarks of Anglo-Saxon civilization, an internal menace has come to American institutions more threatening than any external peril now within our purview.

But censorship of the movies will be, in all probability, only a passing and more or less localized phase of our national tendency to indulge in mischievous experimental legislation. If not, however, if censorship should ever become both national and permanent, then would be sounded the doom of those emancipatory institutions which have made of our American experiment in self-government the one great hope, the one burning beacon-light, for an over-governed, over-burdened, over-censored world.



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE MOVIE AS A WORLD LANGUAGE

*The Esperanto of the Tongue—Its Rapidly Increasing Vogue—All Countries Taking It Up—Its Inferiority to the Esperanto of the Eye—Together They May Save the World—“The Covered Wagon”—Its Success as a Picture—Rheims Cathedral and a Prairie Schooner Symbols of Man’s Balanced Fate—Will the Race Choose to Construct or to Destroy?*





## CHAPTER XVII

### THE MOVIE AS A WORLD LANGUAGE

It would be inexpedient, I believe, for me to bring this inadequate, but, I hope, more or less illuminating, investigation of the origin, present status and future possibilities of the screen to an end without going more into detail regarding what I have called the Esperanto of the Eye. That many of the ills to which flesh is heir, especially those springing from misunderstandings between races and nations, might be avoided, in great part, at least, by means of a universal language is far from being a recent idea. Like most seemingly modern generalizations, such as the theory of evolution, the law of the conservation of energy, and other apparently recent forward steps, the possibility of a tongue that should be understood of all men had come within the purview of the Greek and Roman writers of the classic period. But the intervention of the so-called Dark Ages, delaying Man's upward progress by a thousand years, extinguished many a light which "the glory that was

Greece" had given to the world, and it was not until comparatively recent times that any effort of a practical and promising nature had been made to provide the race with a poultice for healing the blows inflicted upon it at the Tower of Babel.

To-day, however, the universal language known as Esperanto, a survival of the fittest from several tongues designed in recent years for general use, is making real progress in various parts of the world. The report of the General Secretariat of the League of Nations for 1922 says: "Language is a great force, and the League of Nations has every reason to watch with particular interest the progress of the Esperanto movement, which should become more widespread and may one day lead to great results from the point of view of the moral unity of the world."

The astonishing progress of Esperanto in its conquest of a polyglot globe is dealt with by John K. Mumford in a recent most readable article in the *New York Herald*, in which he says:

Since 1920 on an average a new book in Esperanto has appeared every other day. Text books and dictionaries exist in French, English, Arabic, Armenian, Czech, Bulgarian, Danish, Esthonian, Finnish, German, Greek, Welsh, Hebrew, Spanish, Dutch, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Georgian, Catalonian, Chinese, Croat, Latin, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Serbian, Slov-

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akian, Slovenian, Turkish and Visayan (Philippine Islands). Many millions of these books have been distributed.

Whatever may be one's attitude toward the League of Nations, the advocacy of "the moral unity of the world" by that organization must meet with approval by the vast majority of right-thinking men. Through moral unification only can the human race reach that plane of civilization upon which freedom from the major ills which now afflict it can be attained. And that the Esperanto of the Tongue, a universal language that is rapidly enlarging the scope of its influence, can perform a mighty service in the cause of peace and progress can not be doubted. But compared to the Esperanto of the Eye, the universal language sprung from the screen, its conquest of the earth is painfully slow, and its final complete triumph would still leave the world-language of the eye more potent in many ways than the world-language of the tongue.

To illustrate the above, let me quote again from Mr. Mumford, who, in discussing the benefits bestowed by Esperanto upon commerce, says: "In Esperanto a business concern can get out a circular setting forth the merits of a washing machine or a face lotion so that even an Eskimo woman can read it, provided she has taken six months lessons in the

universal language.” But in the twinkling of an eye this Eskimo woman could learn from the screen what it might take her half a year to glean from the advertising circular. Furthermore, for many years to come, the Eskimos, not to speak of the more highly civilized races, are more likely to be in constant touch with the Esperanto of the Screen than with the Esperanto of the Printing-Press.

Of course, what men or nations say to each other is essentially more important than the vehicle which they use for saying it. Neither the Esperanto of the Tongue nor of the Eye can be of great service to the cause of civilization unless they disseminate enlightenment rather than confusion, good rather than evil, love rather than hatred, unless they tighten rather than loosen the bonds that hold the nations together in times of peace.

But what Man may do ultimately with his new media for world-wide intercommunication can be, at this juncture, only a matter for vague, though, perhaps, hopeful, conjecture. There is one fact, however, that stands out in startling significance as we contemplate the progress which mankind is making toward the final removal of all barriers toward racial self-knowledge—namely, that humanity seems, for the first time in its career, to feel that the Sphinx whose other name is History is presently to reveal

the secret which, throughout all the ages, it has managed to conceal. The disappearance of the last frontier, the solving of Earth's ancient mysteries, the coming of the wireless and the Esperanto of the Tongue and of the Eye seem to presage some new revelation to the soul of Man that shall remove forever from the entrance to the Garden of Eden that angel with the flaming sword.

Strange, is it not, that close study of the movie and all its works, both good and bad, should intensify the optimism of one who only a few short years ago had abandoned all hope that civilization could ever again be given the opportunity to regain its higher self and fulfill the promise it had once vouchsafed to the race? One foggy morning in the Autumn of 1917 I found myself, in company with a fellow newspaper-correspondent, representing an English daily, on the French front, in the shell-torn square in front of the grand old cathedral at Rheims. That very morning high explosives from the German lines had done further damage to this ancient glory of Gothic architecture, and torn and shattered, defaced and despoiled, it limped toward Heaven, sadly crippled but forever sublime. As I stood gazing, awe-stricken and depressed at the desecrated façade, the outward and visible sign of Man's inhumanity to God, my English companion approached me, stuck his monocle into

his eye, gazed at the ruin before us, and drawled, "My word, but it has been knocked about a bit, hasn't it?"

Yes—and so has our modern civilization been knocked about a bit, to state the case with typically British reserve. As with Rheims cathedral, so with the social structure Man has patiently and painfully erected through recent centuries; it must be repaired, strengthened, and, above all, defended from the iconoclasm that may menace it in the future. And for this renaissance of civilization, and its protection from the internal and external foes by which it was recently so nearly destroyed and by which it is still threatened, the cinematograph can, if God is willing and Man is wise, be of greater service than the majority of people yet fully realize.

Not a day has gone by recently when I have not come upon some new proof that the pessimism which overwhelmed me as I gazed in 1917 at the outraged façade of Rheims is not unreasonably to be replaced by an optimism begotten of the movie. I saw Man in those dark days on the French front in his iconoclastic mood, wantonly destroying the proudest relics of the creative genius of his forebears. To-day I find the screen achieving wonders in conserving, for the sake of posterity, the memory of epic, epoch-making deeds of derring-do that not only glorify our

past but inspire us with hope and courage and ambition for the future.

In illustration of this, let me say something of a recent motion-picture destined to win new friends for an art-form which has only of late been recognized by the more conservative of our *intelligenza* as worthy of their interest and regard. The screening of Emerson Hough's historical romance "The Covered Wagon," which deals with the heroic achievements of the pioneers who blazed a trail, in their quest of California gold, across the prairies and the Rockies, thus conferring a priceless boon upon a nation in the making, is one of the most important milestones in the progress of the movie upward toward its highest plane of endeavor. Says Jesse L. Lasky, of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, speaking of his organization's splendid contribution not merely to movie fans but to those who believe that by the visual study of his past Man may find both warnings and inspirations for his future:

We did our utmost to make this the picture of a decade—a living, moving, historical spectacle which would be of great worth to the world. For the reason that we feel that our efforts have been successful we are therefore going to offer prints to the Smithsonian Institution for preservation in the archives of that institution. Probably never again will a real buffalo hunt be staged, and it is doubtful if any producers will again

undertake the immense task involved in "The Covered Wagon."

Before the actual screening of the story was begun, scouting in search of an appropriate site for the project was carried on in the states of California, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, New Mexico and Arizona. A location was finally chosen in Utah, ninety miles from the nearest town and railroad station. As the instant popular success, combined with the historical importance of "The Covered Wagon," have a direct bearing upon the prophecy and suggestion which I made in the opening chapter of this book, I shall quote at some length from Mr. James Cruze, to whose energy, enthusiasm and skill as a director the triumphant screening of Mr. Hough's stimulating novel is largely due. Says Mr. Cruze:

Did you ever sit on the edge of a volcano expecting an eruption any instant? That was my position. Our camp was not patterned after Fifth Avenue, and I never knew when something might not break loose. One of the difficult problems was the rehearsing of the Indians for the attack on the wagon train. This had to be well timed, so that nobody would be hurt. But the Indians got so excited, whether or not the cameras were grinding, that we could hardly restrain them.

The breaking of the steers to yoke was another exciting job. Quite a number of the cowboys with us would not



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tackle that work, so we had to get special men. They finally accomplished this by yoking the steers together and leaving them for twenty-four hours, and then they were usually willing to stand.

Then that buffalo hunt on Antelope Island, in Great Salt Lake! I shall never forget that. It was thrilling, too; at least Karl Brown, the camera man, thought so. He wanted a close-up of a charging bull buffalo. He had photographed such gems as a hippopotamus, a rhinoceros and several other animals, even an elephant; but he found that a bull buffalo bears a distinct aversion to the camera, or something of the sort.

We had a stockade built to protect the camera men, but Brown had to get outside for this particular shot. He got it, but only a narrow shave prevented the buffalo from getting him. One of the cowboys fired in time and we had buffalo steak that night. Some people told me that Brown felt a little delicacy in the matter and would not eat any.

We forded the Kaw River with our wagon train and our horses and cattle. We—yes, we got them across. It was a frightful scramble, and all I know is that we reached the other side. In the end I was thankful, as any one can imagine, when the picture was finished. They tell me it's good. It ought to be.

What can not Man learn eventually through the Esperanto of the Eye? History is the tale of his conflict between two elements in his nature, the constructive and the destructive. The picture whose evolution is presented in detail above preserves for posterity a thrilling record of our forebears in their

Herculean task of winning a continent from savagery for civilization. It is a representation of Man under the influence of his eternal constructive impetus. Were I drawing an illustration for this chapter, I should depict Rheims cathedral shattered by high explosives beside a prairie schooner drawn by oxen and ask my readers to judge between them, to say which sketch gave us the higher opinion of humanity. Is our race to permit eventually its constructive or its destructive inclinations to dominate its fate? This is the crucial question agitating mankind to-day, and upon the answer given to it the future of all things worth while in the world depends. Who dare assert that that answer is not more likely to be what it should be because the movie is constantly displaying a fuller appreciation of the lofty mission upon earth that has been assigned to it?

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE MOVIE AS THE HOPE OF CIVILIZATION

*Buried Civilizations—They Perished from Lack of Intercommunication—Civilization now World-Wide—Its Salvation Depends on Mutual Understanding—The Screen the Only Universal Tongue—How it can be Made to Rescue the Race—A Dream that Should Come True.*



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE MOVIE AS THE HOPE OF CIVILIZATION

No conscientious writer begins the final chapter of a book that has engaged his energies for a considerable period of time without a feeling of mingled regret and apprehension. He lays aside reluctantly a piece of work which, at its inception, seemed worth doing, and whose doing has given him real pleasure; and, at the same time, he is haunted by the fear that for the attainment of the purpose which he has had in view he has left something of vital importance unsaid, has failed to marshal his facts, figures, suggestions and arguments to the best advantage, and may have allowed at times his own enthusiasm for the subject he has had in hand to repel his less sympathetic readers. This latter possibility is especially disquieting to a writer who has endeavored to stress the significance of the movie, in its constantly multiplying manifestations, as a new but possibly determining factor in the struggle of modern civilization to save itself from the many foes besetting it.

It is hard for "the man on the street," a clear-headed but rather unimaginative being, for whom, among others, this book is written, to admit that what has seemed to him for years past to be but a more or less interesting form of amusement, too much given to errors of taste and judgment, has become, of late, through an amazingly rapid process of evolution, a world power, the influence of which upon the lives of individuals and of nations can not easily be overestimated. But the business, politics and international affairs of the world are dominated for the most part by this same man on the street, and it is imperative, for the sake of his own ultimate welfare, as well as for the good of the race at large, that he be made to realize that the screen as an entertainer, educator, drummer, possessing a monopoly of the race's only universal language, is worthy of his most earnest attention.

In a letter recently written by President Harding to President Sills of Bowdoin College is to be found the following interesting prophecy:

We shall from this time forward have a much more adequate conception of the essential unity of the whole story of mankind, and a keener realization of the fact that all its factors must be weighed and appraised if any of them are to be accurately estimated and understood. I feel strongly that such a broader view of history, if it can be implanted in the community's mind in the future

through the efforts of educators and writers, will contribute greatly to uphold the hands and strengthen the efforts of those who will have to deal with the great problem of human destiny, particularly with that of preserving peace and outlawing war.

This recently accepted broader view of history which, as President Harding says, is an influence making for peace, a new ally to the world forces struggling for a higher and better civilization, can not be implanted in the minds of the public, as I have demonstrated in the first chapter of this book, through educators and writers employing only the old media for the dissemination of their teachings. Neither the book, the rostrum, the pulpit, the printed word, nor all of them combined, have made, nor can they make, that kind of impress upon the much-too-illiterate public which will compel the race to cease committing its habitual crimes and blunders.

But, strangely enough, at the very moment when the enlightened minds of all nations, through the words of contemporary statesmen, scholars and writers, have become convinced of the "essential unity" of human history there has been granted to mankind a medium for the universal dissemination of new ideas, discoveries, facts and generalizations that has in it the power to perform for the race a service the necessity for which President Harding has elo-

quently demonstrated. Scientists and historians have of late served as continuity writers for the great picture drama of man's past, and, lo, the story of the race reveals itself not as scattered, unrelated incidents but as a majestic, coördinated tale, but partially told, whose dénouement may be more splendid than we have hitherto dared to hope it could be.

No student of world affairs can fail to be impressed, despite the cataclysm that overtook the race in 1914, by the pathetic but hopeful and inspiring fact that mankind, by a reasonable and not too difficult confinement of his energies to civilized, peaceful, constructive activities, could raise itself to a much higher plane of civilization in a comparatively short time from the slough of despondency in which it now finds itself. All that is necessary to give Man the buoyancy, courage and incentive necessary to overcome the evils that beset the world is the assurance that the iconoclasm that periodically destroys his own handiwork, the destructive mischievousness of an evil spirit that he has not as yet exorcised, shall never again be allowed to function, that widespread wars shall be permanently relegated to the bloody, accusatory past. The osteopaths assert that a slight maladjustment of even a small bone in a man's skeleton may doom him to death from some fatal malady seemingly unrelated to the framework of his body.



Whatsoever may be the truth in this assertion, it serves to illustrate the point I am making, namely, that the cause of war—any war, small or great,—appears to be almost always ludicrously insignificant compared to the damage it does. We are always face to face with the hideous fact that any slight dislocation of the bony structure of modern civilization might, as was shown by the recent war of wars, bring about its complete annihilation. Surely it is incumbent upon us, if we are not, as a race, madmen or morons, to take full advantage of any new medium or method that presents itself for the safeguarding of peace on earth, for the furtherance of good will to men.

Since that red day in June, 1914, when the assassin Gavriilo Prinzip fired the shot that not only echoed around the world but almost overturned the very pillars of civilization's temple, two antagonistic tendencies upon the part of mankind have displayed themselves with unprecedented impressiveness. Man's destructiveness has been raised to the nth power, while his constructive ingenuity has been exhibited in an amazing and encouraging way. The laboratories of the world to-day are solving problems the solution of which places the human race absolutely in control of its own destiny. It may, if it so chooses, commit suicide through high explosives or

poison gas, or it may devote itself successfully to the overthrow and annihilation of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, War, Famine, Poverty and Disease.

Now what bearing has all this upon the subject-matter of this book, what has a biography of the movie got to do with the choice mankind must presently make between a higher civilization and a return to savagery, between the call of the millennium and the lure of the jungle, between science making earth a paradise and science making earth a hell? If my preceding chapters have not supplied a convincing answer to this query, let me, even though I repeat myself, endeavor, before I bring this labor of love to a close, to formulate a concise, but comprehensive and convincing, answer to a question that future generations may consider the most important that the soul of Man ever asked of the physical universe. Is it not conceivable that posterity will laud us of to-day for inventing the Esperanto of the Eye and marvel at us because we failed to make full use of it to attain that enlightenment which is the *sine qua non* of our race's salvation? May not our descendants revere us for inventing the screen, while, at the same time, they mock at us for our delay in taking advantage of its highest possibilities as an ally to progress, as a defense against racial deterioration?

In various parts of the world of late, in the Arctic regions, in South and Central America, in Mexico and New Mexico, in South Africa and Egypt, in Asia Minor and elsewhere, archæologists have, through excavations and allied activities, brought to light the remains of prehistoric civilizations so remote in time and so high in character that a new aspect has been given to various periods in the progress of the race from the cave and jungle to Paris and New York. It is unquestionable that Man during the countless ages that have passed has attained at times in various localities a condition of cultured enlightenment that appears admirable from our modern point of view only to lose it again either through internal or external foes, or through both combined. The outstanding and highly significant fact is this, that the human race, no matter how splendid a development it might display sporadically and locally, could make no general and permanent progress until the nations had devised some method of widespread intercommunication. The earth is a graveyard of great cities and great peoples who were forced to pass into oblivion without revealing to the outer barbarians of their time the secret of their greatness. Nor was a highly civilized people in one part of the world able to form ties with some equally advanced people far afield—and so, though they both

possessed the key to the higher knowledge, they were ignorant of each other and both were doomed eventually to perish.

To-day civilization, so far as its surface manifestations are concerned, is not a localized but a world-wide phenomenon. It can not be completely buried, as have been so many of its miniature predecessors. The Congo has its telephones and the Arctic region its wireless. But in so far as modern civilization is more comprehensive than the Babylonian or the Egyptian, is not provincial but cosmopolitan, so would its downfall be more tragically appalling than any catastrophe that has yet afflicted the human race. And from all parts of the world come to us the voices of observant men and women who, alive to the warnings vouchsafed to us by the recent war of wars, are imploring humanity to look not with passion but with reason at the situation of the world to-day and to take measures at once that shall drag us back from the edge of the precipice we have reached.

Has the Esperanto of the Eye, the only medium the race has ever devised for universal intercommunication, come too late to rescue mankind from impending doom? Not if rulers, law-makers, teachers, preachers, diplomatists, statesmen, all men and women who influence the heart, mind and conscience of human groups, small or great, realize in time that

in the screen the race has found a medium which, rightly used, could mould for it a future infinitely superior to its deplorable past.

There will be, I fully realize, those who will jeer at the basic idea underlying the contention that I have made in this little book, ridicule me for believing that, although a man cannot raise himself by his boot-straps, mankind at large can elevate itself by means of the regenerated, ever-increasingly-potent movie. Nevertheless, as I have been describing in some detail the evolutionary steps that have raised the screen from a toy to a world power, have broadened its scope from a plaything to a sleepless influence affecting the destinies of men and nations, I have been constantly more convinced that the suggestion regarding a great world centre for the enlightenment of mankind through visual instruction, made in my first chapter, becomes every month more feasible, as it also, as the days pass and the world appears to go from bad to worse, grows more imperatively necessary. The screen is a mirror in which the race can see itself as it has been and as it is, and a tongue, comprehended of all men, that might, if it rises to its great mission, bring salvation to the world.

“A lighthouse of the past, a university of universities, a fountain of all revealed knowledge, inculcated through a medium understood of all men, a

Mecca for the pilgrims of progress from all corners of the earth,"—that is my dream, and, for having dreamed it, I know that I am a better man. By the same token, the human race would become a better race if it possessed the foresight and common-sense to make my dream come true!

## APPENDICES





## APPENDIX A

### STATISTICS SHOWING THE SCOPE OF THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

Motion picture theatres in the United States.....	15,000
Seating capacity (one show).....	7,605,000
Average weekly attendance at picture theatres.....	50,000,000
Admissions paid annually.....	\$520,000,000
The average number of reels used for one performance.....	8
Average number of seats in picture theatres.....	507
Number of persons employed in picture theatres.....	105,000
Persons employed in picture production.....	50,000
Permanent employees in all branches of picture industry.....	300,000
Investment in motion picture industry..	\$1,250,000,000
Approximate cost of pictures produced annually.....	\$200,000,000
Salaries and wages paid annually at studios in production.....	\$75,000,000
Cost of costumes, scenery, and other materials and supplies used in production annually.....	\$50,000,000

Average number of feature films produced annually.....	700
Average number of short reel subjects, excluding news reels, annually.....	1,500
Taxable motion picture property in the United States.....	\$720,000,000
Percentage of pictures made in California (1922).....	84%
Percentage of pictures made in New York (1922).....	12%
Percentage of pictures made elsewhere in United States (1922).....	4%
Foreign made pictures sent here for sale (1922).....	425
Foreign made pictures sold and released for exhibition.....	6
Theatres running six to seven days per week.....	9,000
Theatres running four to five days per week.....	1,500
Theatres running one to three days per week.....	4,500
Lineal feet of film exported in 1921.....	140,000,000
Lineal feet of film exported in 1913.....	32,000,000
Percentage of American films used in foreign countries.....	90
Film footage used each week by news reels	1,400,000
Combined circulation of news reels weekly.....	40,000,000
Number of theatres using news reels weekly.....	11,000
Amount spent annually by producers and exhibitors in newspaper and magazine advertising.....	\$5,000,000

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Amount spent annually by producers in photos, cuts, slides, and other accessories.....	\$2,000,000
Amount spent annually by producers in lithographs.....	\$2,000,000
Amount spent annually by producers in printing and engraving.....	\$3,000,000
Hospitals and charitable institutions in U. S. equipped for showing motion pictures, Jan. 1, 1923.....	7,000
The number of schools and churches in U. S. equipped for showing motion pictures, Jan. 1, 1923, almost equals the number of theatres.	
Practically every State and Federal Penitentiary, Penal Institution and House of Detention in the U. S. shows motion pictures regularly to their inmates.	

## APPENDIX B

### THE SCREEN AS A NEW LIFE GIVER TO LITERARY CLASSICS

The following quotations are culled from recent reports made by librarians in various parts of the United States:

"The filming of books always causes a great demand for them. A call comes immediately after the advertisement appears in local newspapers and lasts months, and, in cases where pictures are extraordinarily good, years after the film has been shown. Before the exhibition of the pictures, 'Peter Ibbetson' stood on the shelf. Dumas was read by few, and interest in 'The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse' lagged. Since the films have been shown here, these books are circulating constantly.

"Not only do the films increase the demand for a particular book, but interest is aroused in the time and setting of the story. For instance, after 'The Three Musketeers' was shown, calls came for the life of Richelieu and the history of the reign of Charles First. Dumas is now in great demand. 'Orphans of the Storm' brought calls for the life of Danton and the history of the French Revolution. 'Passion' overwhelmed us with demands for the life of Dubarry and the life of Louis XIV."

*Walnut Hills Librarian, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

"I can say, most emphatically, that the filming of literary classics does have a very noticeable effect upon

the reading of the books filmed. The increase in the demand and use of these books is noticeable from the very moment they are announced. 'Robin Hood' is on here now, and long before it first appeared, every scrap of our information on Robin Hood was out in use. Recently this was true of 'The Prisoner of Zenda,' a subject which has been dead for quite some time in library circulation and all at once it was revived with a tremendous demand. Not long ago we had a sudden call from many parts of the city for material about 'Fanchon the Cricket' and later learned that the film had been running in an obscure community moving picture house."

*Charles E. Rusk, Librarian, Indianapolis, Ind.*

"In some cases there is a demand for the books in foreign languages such as Italian and Hungarian, and the showing of 'The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse' brought requests for the book in the original Spanish."

*Librarian of Public Library, Cleveland, Ohio.*

"Very often not only the story filmed is called for, but others by the same author. In the case of 'Monte Cristo,' it has led to a great demand for all the works of Dumas. 'A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court' has revived the interest in others of Mark Twain's works."

*Report by a New England Librarian.*

"The screen creates a new demand on the part of those who have not themselves seen the picture. A middlewestern librarian tells me that many of their calls for the book come from those who have seen the advertising of the picture, or who have heard their friends

talk about it, or who assume that a book which has found its way into motion pictures must be out of the ordinary. By way of anticipating and satisfying this demand, that librarian has kept a display rack of books in constant circulation by placing the sign above them: 'These Books Have Appeared in the Movies.' "

*Ralph Hayes.*

## APPENDIX C

### WHAT MASSACHUSETTS THINKS OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORSHIP

In 1921, the legislature of Massachusetts was induced to pass a censorship law. By petition it became a referendum matter and on November 7, 1922, the public of Massachusetts voted upon the question of whether or not the people desired a censorship of the motion picture. The people defeated the measure by a vote of 553,173 to 208,252, a majority of 344,921 against censorship.

It was the first time the public of any State had ever been given the opportunity to register its opinion on this important subject. Massachusetts is a conservative State. Its people are conservative people. They rejected censorship by a vote greater than that given to any candidate on the ticket or to any issue. Their voice at the polls was based upon a thorough understanding and consideration of this issue. In this work of enlightenment, the newspapers of Massachusetts performed a tremendous service to the motion picture. Ninety-two per cent of them stood staunchly upon the principle that freedom of expression upon the screen is just as essential to its further development as freedom of the press is essential to the continued enlightenment of mankind.

## APPENDIX D

### SIGNIFICANT DATES IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE MOTION PICTURE

Daguerre, Louis Jacques Mandé, of France, inventor of photography, born 1789, died 1851.

Desvignes, of France, devised apparatus for animated photography, 1860.

Du Mont, of France, formulated scheme of chronophotography, 1861.

Muybridge, an Englishman, photographs a trotting horse in motion, California, 1872.

Jansen's photographic revolver for recording the transit of Venus, 1874.

Dr. E. J. Marey's photographic gun for studying the flight of birds, 1882.

Stern filed patent in Great Britain for chronophotographic apparatus, 1889.

Roller photography invented by Eastman and Walker, 1885.

Eastman, an American, invents celluloid film, 1889.

Edison, an American, exhibits his Kinetoscope at Chicago World's Fair, 1893.

Robert W. Paul, an Englishman, throws first movie picture on screen at his studio in Hatton Garden, London, early in 1895.

Paul shows movies at the Royal Institution, London, Feb. 28, 1896.



Paul and Sir Augustus Harris win success at the Olympia Theatre, London, with the "Theatograph," 1896.

Richard G. Hollaman, an American, exhibits the cinematograph at his New York Eden Musée, 1896.

Charles Urban installs his new projector at the Eden Musée, 1897.

First topical film—the English Derby of 1896—was shown by Paul at the Alhambra, London, 1896.

## APPENDIX E

### WHAT THE MOVIE HAS DONE FOR A GREAT RAILROAD

A little over two years ago, the loss and damage bill of the Illinois Central Railroad, on carload and less-than-carload shipments, averaged more than \$2,500,000 for a single year.

Seven months after motion pictures were adopted to educate employees in proper methods of freight handling, in connection with a vigorous campaign to improve the record, that expense was reduced a cool million dollars! The reduction has averaged approximately fifty per cent for the year. Best of all, the bill is still on the down-grade.

In addition to reels on "Loss and Damage," the Illinois Central Railroad has produced other films on methods of engineering and switching. Its "visual education department" boasts a collection of 6000 slides, in addition to nearly half a million negatives of still photographs.

There are likewise motion pictures made expressly to educate farmers along the road's right of way in modern scientific methods of poultry raising, soil treatment, dairying, potato culture, and packing produce for shipment. A force of industrial agents maintained by the railroad holds farmers' meetings at which talks and films are the order of the day, and conducts field days and other get-together affairs where "the movies" constitute an always dependable attraction.

*Visual Education, March, 1923.*

## APPENDIX F

### FACTS AND FIGURES SHOWING THAT THE SCREEN HAS BECOME THE FIRST WORLD CONQUEROR

Buenos Aires, Argentina, has 128 motion-picture theatres, with 2,250,000 paid admissions per month.

Montreal, Canada, supports over sixty motion-picture theatres.

Santiago, Chile, has twenty-three motion-picture theatres, and a new one is now in process of construction which will seat 2,500 people.

American films depicting exciting serial dramas and boisterous comedies are popular in China. Shanghai has 20 motion-picture theatres; Canton 15; Hongkong 8, Peking, Tientsin and Hankow 7 each.

The first motion-picture drama produced in China with a native cast was screened July 1, 1921, at the Olympic Theatre, Shanghai, by the Chinese Motion Picture Society.

In Greece there are about 40 motion-picture houses, 9 of which are in Athens.

In India, Burma and Ceylon there are about 168 motion picture houses, 16 of which are in Calcutta.

In Java there are 250 motion-picture theatres. American films are the most popular. One of the largest theatres seats 2,000 Europeans and 2,500 natives.

In Japan there are about 600 motion-picture theatres

giving regular performances and about 2,000 more giving occasional performances. Tokyo has about 50 houses, Osaka 30, Kobe 15, and Kyoto 10. These theatres seat between 500 and 1,500 people.

There are in the Netherlands 170 licensed film theatres, with more than 50 other theatres, town halls and society rooms where films are occasionally shown.

Bergen, Norway, a city of 100,000 inhabitants, has seven motion-picture theatres, with a combined seating capacity of 4,000. Seventy-five per cent of the films shown are American.

Lisbon, Portugal, has 3 motion-picture theatres with a seating capacity of 800 persons each, and thirteen smaller houses seating about 400 each. There are about 120 motion-picture theatres in all Portugal. American picture films are rapidly increasing in popularity.

The largest motion picture theatre in Bucharest, Rumania, has a seating capacity of 1,200.

Sweden is better supplied with motion picture theatres than any country in the world. With a population of 6,000,000 it has over 600 cinema houses. Stockholm, with a population of 500,000, has 75 picture theatres.

Great Britain has about 4,000 motion-picture theatres. The largest and best appointed cinema theatres in the United Kingdom are found in the provincial towns of England such as Manchester, Bradford, Leeds and Liverpool.

France has about 2000 picture theatres, Denmark 250, Belgium about 800.

## APPENDIX G

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC RELATIONS  
COOPERATING WITH MOTION PICTURE PRODUCERS  
AND DISTRIBUTORS OF AMERICA, INC.

The Nat'l Society of the Sons of the American Revolution  
National Society Colonial Dames of America  
National Health Council  
Boys' Club Federation  
American Historical Association  
The American Sunday School Union  
Chautauqua Institution  
National Safety Council  
American Home Economics Assn.  
The Nat'l Community Center Assn.  
Community Service  
American City Bureau  
Central Conference of American Rabbis  
Safety Institute of America  
Child Welfare League of America  
Playground and Recreation Association of America  
Commonwealth Club  
Actors' Equity Association  
The Woodcraft League of America  
American Federation of Labor  
Jewish Welfare Board

Girl Reserve Department of the Y. W. C. A.  
Russell Sage Foundation  
Camp Fire Girls  
The Council of Jewish Women  
National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness  
Nat'l Assn. of Civic Secretaries  
Cooper Union  
National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher  
Associations  
Associated Advertising Clubs of the World  
Girl Scouts  
American Country Life Assn.  
Nat'l Tuberculosis Association  
American Child Health Assn.  
National Education Association  
Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America  
General Federation of Women's Clubs  
The Academy of Political Science  
National Child Labor Committee  
American Civic Association  
International Federation of Catholic Alumnae  
Nat'l Catholic Welfare Council  
War Dept. Civilian Advisory Board  
Young Women's Hebrew Association  
The Girls' Friendly Society in America  
The Nat'l Assn. of Book Publishers  
The Nat'l Security League  
Daughters of the American Revolution  
The International Committee of Y. M. C. A.  
N. Y. Child Welfare Committee  
Daughters of the American Revolution  
The Salvation Army  
Young Men's Hebrew Association  
Nat'l Council of Catholic Women

Girl Scouts

American Museum of Natural History

National Council of Catholic Men

Dairymen's League Co-operative Assn.

National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations

International Federation of Catholic Alumnæ

American Library Association

National Civic Federation

Boy Scouts of America











UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



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UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY